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THE

ENGLISH AT HOME

BY

ALPHONSE ESQUIROS.

60490

TRANSLATED AND EDITED BY

LASCELLES WRAXALL.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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"It would be fortunate for the good understanding between France and England, if all the descriptions of English life and manners submitted to the consideration of the French people were as faithful as that given of the British soldier by M. Alphonse Esquiros in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*. The essays which that gentleman has produced on this subject are remarkable for their good sense and truth. Of course he looks at our institutions from without, and draws involuntary comparisons between our country and his own, but we cannot remember to have seen any pictures of Englishmen by a foreign hand in which there was so little exaggeration, distortion, or error."

Times, Nov. 23, 1860.

"We would readily believe that the observations of M. Esquiros on the British army are as judicious and impartial as they are flattering. He says that the idea had been too hastily taken up that Great Britain was not a military nation. The defensive movement of the last year has completely refuted an opinion which at no time rested on any sound basis. He asks whether British soldiers, although few in number, have not sufficed in all the great crises of their country's history? During the last two centuries has not the weight of their arms been felt in the balance of the destinies of the Continent? Whenever conquest was a necessity have they not conquered? He will not even write the painful name of Waterloo. It may be enough to notice that quite recently Britain, with a handful of men, has recovered India."

Saturday Review, Jan. 5.

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THIS WORK IS DEDICATED

TO

MONSIEUR BULOZ,

IN

RECOGNITION OF THE UNCEASING EFFORTS MADE BY THE

REVUE DES DEUX MONDES

TO PRODUCE A PRACTICAL ALLIANCE BETWEEN THE TWO GREAT

WESTERN NATIONS,

AND TO DETHRONE KING SWORD IN FAVOUR OF KING PEN.

PREFACE.

WHILE recently noticing an absurd libel upon England, written by one Larcher, and produced under the auspices of Emile de Girardin, the *Athenæum* pertinently remarked that "a work like the one before us is calculated to do as much moral harm as the commercial treaty can do material good." The publication of the present volumes will, I trust, prove that all Frenchmen do not agree with Mr. Larcher, but that there are some among them moved by a generous desire to draw more closely together the good understanding which ought to exist between the two great Western Powers.

It is unnecessary for me to say anything in favour of these Essays, for they received the stamp of public approval on their appearance in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, the organ of the

constitutional party in France. M. Esquiros, himself, tells us that he has an advantage over previous French writers about England, in that "he has taken root in the civilisation through which they passed on the wings of steam." He also adds, that, "though heartily loving England for her institutions, her liberty, her grandeur, and the generous hospitality accorded himself, he has retained sufficient of the stranger in his language and tastes, to judge impartially the people among whom he sojourns."

This is a question, however, which entirely depends on our readers. I can but hope that they will agree with M. Esquiros, while I crave permission to add one word as to my own share in the task. I could have rendered certain passages more soothing to the national pride, but I held by Sir Joseph Paxton's memorable remark, that "it is sometimes a good thing to have the conceit taken out of us." With the exception, therefore, of omitting certain statements, possessing no special novelty, I have allowed our French friend to speak for himself.

I apprehend the criticism, that the subjects dilated on in these volumes display no cohesion, and that M. Esquiros seems to diverge from one subject to another without due preparation; but it must not be left out of sight that the Essays

which formed their foundation were not written with the settled purpose of a book. The Author has usually selected the topic that created an interest at the moment of writing, and his only desire was to remove any false impressions that might be produced in his own country, by the garbled reports of the French papers, as to the manners and institutions of England. I am ready to grant, therefore, that the volumes may appear erratic—with one exception, the chapters devoted to the British army. The correctness of view, and the honesty they display, have already been amply acknowledged by the British Press, and I am glad to say that they have exercised a profound influence in the country to which they were originally addressed. During the late passing exacerbation that sprang up between the two countries, the fault was not entirely on the side of the French; they may have caused us uneasiness by their *vaisseaux-béliers*, but we have given a very sufficient response in our magnificent army of Volunteers. The war-panic had both its good and its bad points: while proving to us the weakness of our defensive system, it brought out at the same time, in startling relief, the military virtues of the British nation; and while France can boast of her six hundred thousand men, ready at the first signal of war, we

can more proudly point to our hundred and fifty thousand Volunteers, who have sprung from the soil, bearing on their banner the noble words, DEFENCE BUT NOT DEFIANCE.

Believing that the two empire nations of the world need only to understand each other in order to remain staunch friends, I am proud to contribute my mite to the *entente cordiale*, by introducing to English readers the opinions of a Frenchman, who, while loving his own country, is capable of appreciating those great Anglo-Saxon virtues which have rendered England the only meet ally of a nation too long her rival in arms, but which, it is to be hoped, will never more seek victories on aught but the peaceful paths of commerce.

LASCELLES WRAXALL.

The Hut, Guildford,
April, 1861.

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THE ENGLISH AT HOME.

CHAPTER I.

GEOLOGICAL MUSEUMS AND CABINETS—BRITISH MUSEUM—MUSEUM OF PRACTICAL GEOLOGY—GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON—THE THREE GEOLOGICAL AGES OF GREAT BRITAIN.

NOTHING is more easy than to write about England, nothing more difficult than to understand that country. The visitor does not find here, as in Holland, a simple population, whose manners and occupations offer family traits: on the contrary, he has before him a powerful and complicated civilisation, made up of contrasts, a prodigious collection of wretchedness and wealth, a society which soars to the sky and descends to the lowest depths. Possibly travellers and moralists have neglected a fertile source of explanation for these contradictions, in the connexion existing between the geology of England and its national life.

Before going further, I purpose, therefore, to investigate, in the first place, the natural events whence the present grandeur and prosperity of the British Isles emerged. The Englishman is the king of matter: he subjugates the elements; renders fire, water, and steam, his vassals; and employs all the brute and blind forces of the physical world. But where is hidden the secret of this incommensurate power? In the earth. If Great Britain be the first industrial nation in the world, she owes it in great measure to her mineral wealth, especially to the two generative elements of mechanical motion—iron and coal. And what country in the universe is better adapted than England for the study of the national territory in relation to civilisation and the arts? The physical constitution of the isles forming the United Kingdom has been the object of persevering research, and we possess three special means of knowledge, in the geological maps, the museums, and the labours of English geologists.

William Smith was the first to draw a stratographic map of England. While still a youth, his attention was attracted by the fossils of the oolitic strata, near which he was born, March 23, 1769, at Churchill, in Oxfordshire. The interest he took in the perusal of these natural hieroglyphics exercised an influence over his choice of a profession. He was employed as engineer in the Somersetshire mines, and finding in his profession

the means of an honourable independence, he selected Bath as his head-quarters, and began making excursions in the surrounding country. He consulted masons, miners, carmen, and labourers, but, above all, he interrogated that great book of geologists, the earth. The fact presently struck him, that the strata succeeding each other on the surface of Great Britain had a definite order, and that each of them, as it were, received a date from the organic remains buried in it. Thus he recognised that the whole earth was not of equal antiquity, but that several ages of rocks, and others of fossils, must have existed.

In 1794 he commenced his great geological map, to which he added a table of the superposition of strata. Devoting to this study all the hours he could abstract from his professional labours, William Smith, in a quarter of a century, and by his own unaided energy, effected for all England what the most distinguished mineralogists had done for only a portion of Germany in fifty years. Looked down upon in his day by practical men as a visionary, he was called contemptuously "Strata Smith:" now he is justly known as the "Father of English geology." His map, only defective in certain portions, has been remodelled and continued by modern geologists, and we now possess a subterraneous geography of England, almost as well known as that of the surface, with the provincial limits and different

climates laid down, from the temperature of the torrid zone to that of Siberia; we can trace deep seas now drained and filled up, old rivers, gulfs whose beds are still visible, petrified forests and the extinct denizens of earth, whose principal features, manners, and order of succession on the surface, the world has preserved for us in memoirs written by itself.

Among the English establishments devoted to the pre-historic history of the country, we will select as the principal sources of our studies the Geological collection of the British Museum, the Museum of Practical Geology, the collections of the Geological Society of London, and the lakes and islands of the Crystal Palace.

A portion of the north gallery of the British Museum is set aside for organic remains. The arrangement of these fossils displays the order of events referring to the history of the world. The visitor first enters a room, the side cases in which are filled with the vestiges of the primitive flora, especially plants imprinted on the coal formation: next come the first animals, the fish, and the attention is soon arrested by the monstrous forms of the reptiles. Enveloped in their robe of stone, these hydras and gorgons are the strangest and most terrible apparitions the human eye can contemplate: their enormous jaws are studded with teeth, and necks horribly distended, as if these animals had been seized and sculptured by the

hand of Nature in the convulsions of a violent death. This collection of reptiles, the richest in the world, occupies rooms III. and IV. As we go on, a new class of extinct animals meets our sight: the terrific *megatherium*, the massive *mastodon*, the mammoth, all the mammifera of the old world, and lastly, against the wall ending this gallery, stands the famous fossil man of Guadaloupe.

The collection of the Museum of Practical Geology, founded by Sir H. de la Beche, and opened to the public in 1851, comprises three orders of natural riches: 1. The characteristic specimens of British marble, serpentine, granitic, building stones, and other materials useful to the architect and sculptor; 2. The animals; and 3. The rocks which serve to illustrate the structure of the British Isles. But these products are not merely shown in their natural state: the eye follows the passage of the native stones or metals up to the requirements of trade and the tools employed to work them; there you see the iron become steel and assume a thousand delicate forms. But the establishment does not solely indicate the application of geology to the wants of life, but also describes by historical monuments the events which produced the present face of Great Britain. The British fossils are arranged in the order of the strata in which they were found buried, from the most ancient forms of life

to those approaching the nearest to our epoch. Geology is a popular science in England; during one winter I attended the interesting course of lectures delivered by Mr. Huxley, and had by my side solemn-faced workmen, who learned, not without surprise, by what strange creatures the earth was trodden at a time when neither man nor any of the present animals existed.

The Geological Society of London was founded in 1808, and at the end of 1855 this institution had eight hundred and seventy-five members. I inspected with great interest at Somerset House its rich and rare museum, which has been principally formed by voluntary gifts: one division is devoted to British specimens, and the other to those obtained from foreign parts.

The Crystal Palace, that fairy-like building, is not specially consecrated to geology. The idea of the founders was to represent the history of nature prior to man, the history of nature since the arrival of our race, and the history of the human race itself. At present, however, we have only to deal with the antiquities of our globe. At the end of the park in the centre of three lakes, are three islands remarkable for the bold attempt made to restore extinct animals. These geological isles and lakes succeed each other in the order displaying the progress and mutations of life on the surface of the earth. The manners of these animals of the old world,

which all lived in England, are indicated by the very arrangement of the locality. Thus, the reptiles, as aquatic beings, are placed in the basins, the amphibia on a small low island, and the more terrestrial animals on a species of plateau, representing a rising continent; lastly, the mammifera occupy a more elevated island. By the side of these strange creatures are the most characteristic plants of the flora existing in their time, and stones obtained from the strata in which the remains of these animals were found bedded. The lakes are also surrounded by everything that can complete the illusion; systematic disorder, sections of strata, raw materials, and fragments of rocks and caverns, which give a very fair idea of an extinct world. You behold here not merely the skeleton, but the external forms under which it is supposed that the ancient animals existed.

Much may, certainly, be said against the temerity of this undertaking, which tends to convert geology into an imaginary science. Several of the animals represented at the Crystal Palace would probably be greatly surprised were they permitted to revisit the glimpses of the moon, and had the power of judging for themselves of the features attributed to them: still, I must not omit to state that these restorations are not arbitrary. The reconstructed animals have generally been selected from those whose skeleton was found entire, or nearly so, in a fossil state. The

superficial form, the outline and skin of the animal, have been added to this basis: but, in doing so, the indications supplied by Nature herself have been in more than one instance used. Portions of petrified integument and bone plates have guided the artist, who has scrupulously copied these vestiges. There are, it is true, lost animals, of whom only the skulls and fragments of the frame have been found: and in that case the head of the monster has been reproduced, emerging from the water, in which the body is supposed to be buried. Perhaps, such an association of science and art is, after all, the first step in a fertile path. I ask myself, for instance, whether the magnificent flora of the carboniferous age, of which we possess all the remains, might not offer interesting subjects for the landscape painter.

We see, then, that there are abundant materials for the man who wishes to limit his researches to the formation of England. We are now in a position to interrogate the country itself, and on our road we shall come across the works and doctrines of the principal English geologists. The history of that portion of the globe which, after undergoing incredible changes, now constitutes the British Isles, may be divided, like the history of the nation, into three great periods, the marvellous chronicles of which we shall find scattered over the surface or in the depths of the ground:—the remote age, the middle age, and the renaissance.

CHAPTER II.

FIRST GEOLOGICAL AGE OF GREAT BRITAIN—THE WELSH MOUNTAINS —THE LONGMYND—LUDLOW CASTLE—THE RED SANDSTONE DISTRICT—THE DEVIL'S CAVE—THE COAL MINES—PRIMITIVE INHABITANTS OF GREAT BRITAIN—SIR R. MURCHISON AND HUGH MILLER.

WALES is annually the gathering ground of tourists; the excursions commence in May, and are often prolonged until the beginning of November. It is difficult to find a more romantic region, formed as it is of lakes, forests, waterfalls, precipices, and a horizon of mountains resembling a group of petrified clouds. These mountains form a portion of the great chain running westward from Cumberland to the Land's End, and in which several English rivers have their source. It may be called an enormous pile of angular and broken masses, connected at the base, save where separated by lakes. The Welsh mountains form the Alps of this great chain; at one spot clothed with a wild vegetation of shrubs and heather, at another, nude and desolate, they rise one above the other, menacing heaven with the sublime

sorrow of the Titans. Such scenes do not merely strike the sight and the imagination, they also offer matter for thought. These mountains, over which Salvator Rosa would have gloated, have another interest beyond that of art, for they are the most ancient sedimentary rocks existing on our globe.

Such a country is a book in which is found written the history of British antiquities; I do not mean those antiquities of yesterday connected with man, but those of nature lost in the night of ages. The rocks of different ages which rend the ground asunder and are piled pell-mell on the summit of these elevations, contain characters which science has deciphered: the annals of time are buried there. These stern mountains, seemingly decaying amid the clouds, are historians, for among these ruins, gorges, and precipices, the geologist can survey the mysteries of creation.

A few years back, the broken twisted strata which rise into mountains or fall back into abysses in northern Wales, offered nothing save a scientific chaos. The most skilful geologists regarded them as a labyrinth of ruins, the inductive thread of which was lost. At length a man arrived who carried order into this sublime confusion of the elements; Sir Roderick Murchison proved that this mass of sedimentary rocks, rent here and there by strata of igneous origin, formed a unique system, to which he gave the name of Si-

LURIAN, because the rocks determining the type are principally found in the region occupied by the Silurians under the Romans. These historic rocks may, at the outset, be divided into two groups, one containing no traces of life, the other displaying the oldest vestiges of organised life which the human eye has been able to discover.

On the Welsh border, not far from Shrewsbury, extends a district, sterile and insignificant to any but the eye seeking the origin of England. There stands a mountain, the Longmynd, or rather a conglomerate of hills, rising hardly more than sixteen hundred feet above the present level of the sea. Deep fissures, ravines with ragged grass-clad sides, and almost angular precipices, occupied by a few small streams, intersect this barren mass, but, it marks the spot where England commenced.

The Longmynd constitutes, with other mountainous groups in Wales (chiefly to the north of Cardigan Bay), the basis of the entire Silurian region. These gloomy rocks are the first that were upheaved from the ocean bed, under which lay, at an incredibly remote period, what is now called old Albion. Against these rocks, now situated inland, broke the first waves that met with any resistance. You have before you the oldest breakwater that defied the ocean, the rock citadel which preceded the construction of that glorious island, whose power now extends to the extremity of the world. Every Englishman who

feels any enthusiasm for the antiquities of his nation, is bound to salute, in this old piece of England, the cradle of his native land.

Geologists have necessarily sought the origin of life here, but, up to the present, the rocks forming in England the basis of the Silurian system, although exposed to an extent equal to no less than twenty-six thousand feet in thickness, have kept the secret of the earliest period of creation. No trace of fossils has yet been discovered, in spite of arduous research. But it must not be concluded hastily from this fact that the primeval ocean, of which these rocks formed the bed, was uninhabited, for, to the south of Dublin, rocks recognised as belonging to the same age and texture as those of the Longmynd, have recently furnished proof that life was not at that moment absent from the waste of waters. Two varieties of a humble polypus, the *odhamia*, have been found, and in the eyes of science this fossil is venerable, for the little being it represents was, doubtless, one of the first denizens of Great Britain, or, at least of the oceanic chaos in which that region of the globe was at that period enveloped. A rock and a zoophyte, *parva initia magnis.*

From the sedimentary strata without fossils, such as exist in Shropshire and Wales, we pass to others of the Silurian formation which, on the contrary, are filled with relics of life, and this transition may be observed almost at the first

glance. Let us go to Llanberis Valley, where we find two magnificent lakes connected by a river. From the lower of these lakes you perceive in the distance the heights of haughty Snowdon, that giant of the British Alps, which seems to touch the south with its right hand, the north with its left. In the foreground, at the summit of a rock, are the ruins of Dolbadaru Castle, a circular tower, whose shadow falls majestically over the placid surface of the lake. The slaty sides of the lower masses surrounding the castle present no trace of life; but mountains are gradually heaped on mountains, Ossa on Pelion; and in this ascending order the eye follows the passage to the fossiliferous rocks of Snowdon. The same order of transition may be remarked at Barmouth and other parts of Wales.

A peculiar interest attaches to these organic remains if, as Sir R. Murchison believes, the commencement of life on the globe may be found there. The waters in the bosom of which these powerful rocks were held in solution for thousands and thousands of years were, according to his view, the first peopled in the order of time. Other English geologists, more timid or more prudent than Sir R. Murchison, content themselves with regarding these Silurian fossils as the relics of the oldest animated beings that are revealed in the depths of the geological abyss, but not as necessarily the first-born of Nature. While admitting, with Sir R. Murchison, the hypothesis

of the development of life in accordance with the chronological order of the soil, they say that it is not at all permissible to believe that the *odhamia*, the most ancient of known fossils, but not the most rudimentary of animals, was the first denizen of the seas. This being, of so simple a form, must have been preceded by others of even more simple form: the ancestor of the Silurian fauna must have had other ancestors. It may be the infancy of life but not its commencement. But where are the traces of a primitive order of things to be sought?

The Silurian mountains, themselves ruins, contain other ruins. In the bosom of the Longmynd rocks, the geologists have discovered conglomerates of pebbles resembling none of the rocks now standing above ground. These pebbles consequently emanate from earlier labours: they are the fragments of other mountains, perhaps even of continents, which anterior seas broke, destroyed, and crumbled away. There is very little prospect, the reader sees, of ever finding the origin of life on the surface of the globe, since that page of the genesis of existing facts has been torn away. Some years ago, geologists liked to rest their eyes, in this long night of ages, on an ideal limit, starting from which animals and plants began to appear. At present, this line of demarcation between the strata displaying no vestige of organised beings, and those containing

fossils, is almost effaced amid ruins. On the horizon of the primitive world, a series of departed worlds appear in a vague outline. We must, therefore, in all probability, make up our minds to lose the stream of life in those dumb epochs, when time succeeds time, till it assumes the mask of eternity. The river of creation hides its source like the Nile, to quote Bossuet.

However this may be, the time has now arrived for us to form an idea of that Silurian fauna, which Sir R. Murchison himself designates as protozoic. Three zones of life are found in Shropshire and the Welsh mountains, according to the age of the mountains. In the first place, the graptoliths have left a flying trace of their obscure existence, while another characteristic fossil of the earliest rocks is a flat-shelled mollusc, the *lingula*. This shell is of a horny nature, and very slightly calcareous, and the conclusion has been drawn that the covering of this bivalve was adapted to the conditions of a sea the bed of which was muddy and sandy, but contained little or no lime to construct a harder integument. The family to which the lingula belongs has left such abundant evidence in the Welsh mountains, that Sir Roderick christens the geologic period, of which these mountains are the mighty tombs, the Brachiopod age. Here ceases, or nearly so, the first horizon of Silurian life.

As we ascend, we discover in the flexible lines

of other rocks the mid stage of the system in which the molluscs and articulate animals of the ancient seas appeared; and, lastly, the third zone of created beings is distinctly defined.

The Cephalopods at that period lived a free life in the bosom of the seas they swam about. Their organisation indicates that they must have been predacious animals. Each age of the earth had its tyrant, and the orthoceratite was the Nimrod of the Silurian seas. The imagination of naturalists is fond of representing this mighty hunter attacking its victim on the surface of the water, following it to the lowest depths, enfolding it in its long arms, and then conveying it to its powerful mouth, which was in shape like a sparrow's beak. Another peculiar animal was the trilobite, a species of marine wood-louse, remarkable for the structure of its eyes, some of which have been found in a state of perfect preservation. Formed of four hundred spherical facets arranged symmetrically on the surface of a cornea, the eye of this animal enabled it to see what was going on around it, on the surface and in the depths of the sea. So curious an apparatus has enabled naturalists to solve an interesting problem, that of knowing whether the ancient seas were as transparent as those of our day. It was asserted that if the atmosphere differed very greatly from the conditions of the air that surrounds ourselves, or if the waters were constantly agitated or perturbed,

we should find a corresponding anomaly in the organs of the animals intended to receive light. One of the first creatures seen in these remote periods gives us the meteorological history of the world in which it lived, and that, too, by a single organ—the eye.

Now let us change the scene. In Shropshire there is a small town situated on a height, in the midst of a luxuriant landscape, and over it towers old Ludlow Castle, now in ruins. From this spot the traveller beholds a landscape which contrasts, through the gaiety of the houses and the cultivation, with the imposing but sad presence of the splendid Welsh Alps, where the eye surveys naked cones, and even entire mountains, punished for their pride with sterility. The rocks on which Ludlow Castle stands merit our attention, for their surface is here and there covered with furrows traced at a period, it is supposed, when what is now stone was still sand and mud. These small undulating ripples resemble those we may see traced on our own shores by the receding tide.

This is not all. In these self-same rocks of Ludlow Castle, belonging to what Sir R. Murchison calls the Upper Silurian groups, the first traces of terrestrial plants and fish were discovered. These fish, the oldest representatives of their class, appear to the author of Siluria an event; for life rises with them one degree on the genealogical

line of animal creation. After a long period of ages, during which the vertebrates do not seem to have been called into existence, the *onchus* (such is the name of the fossil fish) finally ruled over the old population of the seas. The onchus, in a relative sense, was the *homo* of its time. By its side or beneath it lived zoophites, annelids, molluscs, and crustaceans. The surface of the old Silurian ocean was also studded with crinoids, or animals attached by a species of stalk to the bed of the sea, and which expanded in the shape of a cup on the surface. The mass of water—the England of that age—was enlivened by these animated flowers, which yielded gracefully to the slightest current, as our flowers do to the breeze, and would have appeared to the observer (had there been one at that time) like a vast field of lilies and tulips.

A journey through Shropshire and Wales, so fertile in grand scenery, we see, therefore, is like traversing the primitive field of creation. These two districts, confounded in the same geological province, represent an epoch of nature of extraordinary duration. Thirty thousand feet of strata at least, comprising the igneous rocks, have been recognised as belonging to the Silurian series in Wales alone. The time during which these rocks were deposited and upheaved may be estimated here by the density of the mass.

Though Shropshire and Wales are the typical

kingdom of the old Silurian epoch, rocks of the same composition, the same date, and containing the same organic remains, are found in other parts of the United Kingdom. In Scotland they occupy a considerable extent: there, too, they are swollen up into marshy mountains of a savage and desolate character, which have been called the Southern Highlands. These masses, now separated by considerable distances, tell the same history; they are pages of the British Genesis. Everywhere in Ireland, in England, in Scotland, the Silurian mountains present a formidable aspect. These old sedimentary strata are perforated at intervals by rocks of igneous origin, more ancient still. You see, emerging from the huge mass, porphyry, gneiss, and, lastly, the haughty granite which towers to the sky, with the cry, *Dinanzi a me non fur cose create se non eterne.* Elsewhere, these mountains, the eldest daughters of earth, are associated with historic monuments, dismantled castles, old ruined abbeys, or else raging waterfalls, melancholy lakes, and weather-beaten forests, whose thrice centennial trees are still the youngest antiquities on this horizon, which loses itself in the clouds.

I think I have sufficiently indicated the influence of the Silurian formation on the scenery. I will now show, in a few features, the empire it exercises over the manners of the people. Wales, despite numerous modes of communication, and

the many tourists who traverse it annually, has remained, like some portions of Scotland, estranged from England in habits, tradition, and language. There the ark of ancient customs has rested as on a promontory. It must be remarked that a shifting population, slightly attached to those customs and institutions which form, in a measure, the moral country, generally dwells in a flat, moving, and sandy soil; while, on the other hand, those solid rocks, which abound in striking features, are inhabited by a race rooted in the ground, with granitic characters and tenacious manners. The western mountains of England, which defy the skill of the railway engineer, have served to entrench a local spirit; and, behind these ramparts, groups of shepherds inhabit the same districts in which their ancestors resided from time immemorial. They are all more or less closely related, and beneath the lowly roofs which hang on the sides of the mountains, like birds'-nests, you will find a thousand touching pictures of family life—children rejoicing the aged, and old people sanctifying the house.

Sober, saving, economical, and hardened by fatigue, they clamber barefooted during the summer over the harsh, stern rocks; humane and hospitable, they offer a hearty welcome to the wayfarer. Whoever has visited Wales, will have noticed the beauty of the setting sun among the mountains; in the same way as Snowdon retains

for a long time the beams of the departed planet, long after the whole surrounding country has been buried in gloom, so has the population of these heights preserved a reflexion of ancient virtues. The inhabitants of this region are the descendants of the old Cymri, who, swept away by the Saxon invasion, asked from the mountains, those natural fortresses, a refuge for their national character. Is it not an interesting fact to find the most ancient race of England dwelling on the oldest rocks?

Another circumstance struck me: the Welsh peasants talk like our Britons—with whom they have many points of resemblance—the old Celtic tongue. A few years ago, six men were fetched from the coasts of Armorica, and introduced to the inhabitants of Old Cambria. Though at first embarrassed, they soon agreed as to the pronunciation of certain words which had varied, and the conversation went on as between old friends. These two branches of the same race met again, and understood each other after all the revolutions of history and nature. It is, in fact, remarkable that Wales, the English Brittany, is situated on the same Silurian rocks which form the basis of the French Brittany, so that the mountains of the two countries, now separated by a chasm, were once the bed of the same sea.

The uniform mass of old sedimentary rocks has originated a few local trades, especially the ex-

traction of slates, which are used in Wales, not only to cover the houses, but also for tombstones and works of art. Among the most extensive and celebrated quarries, I may mention those of Penrhyn. The explosions re-echoing from mountain to mountain; the workmen suspended by ropes on the face of the old crags, or crouching on the narrow edge of the rocks; the rows of galleries hollowed out one above the other; the movement of the pumps, mills, and saws—all in these parts, gives a grand idea of the power of man, who has opened up a source of toil and prosperity in the flank of those sterile mountains.

The immense chain which traverses North Wales runs southward towards Devonshire, with a gradual diminution of height. We enter another age of nature, the Devonian era, where facts change with the nature of the landscape and the colour of the rocks.

In South Wales the transition from the grey-hued Silurian rocks to the deposits of old red sandstone may be followed with the naked eye. At first the border between these two formations is difficult to fix, because the strata pass from one epoch to the other with graduated shades of colour; but soon the change is distinct, and nothing can form a more striking contrast than the yellow and red masses lying on the gloomy base of the Silurian rocks. Whoever is desirous to enjoy this contrast, whoever loves the poetry of ruins,

should follow, between Ludlow and the Clee Hills, a succession of changes which imparts a fresh charm to the landscape. This difference in the colour of the rocks is the result of a change that occurred in the bed of the old seas. During the period which had elapsed, the bottom of the Silurian ocean was occupied by deposits of blackish mud, succeeded towards the close of the period, and especially in the following age, by sandy deposits, most frequently coloured by an infusion of oxide of iron. These changes were accompanied by the gradual disappearance of the old denizens, and the arrival of other animals better adapted to the new conditions of the seas.

Though less abrupt than the preceding formation, the Devonian is still distinguished by bold and imposing features. The grand faces of the system appear in England in the escarpments of the highest mountains in South Wales: the Brecon Beacons, whose double head is veiled in the clouds, and Grongar Hill, near Caermarthen, where the eye rests on an admirable medley of water, woods, rocks, and ruins. The enormous groups of Devonian rock, which seem to bear on their brow the rust of centuries, are next developed in Devonshire (whence the name), in Cornwall, and Herefordshire; but it is specially in Scotland that the piles of old red sandstone assume a religiously grand character. To the east of the Highlands, three isolated rocks rise in the centre of

the sea. Surmounted by a cone more or less truncated, beaten by the convulsions of the sullen waves, and standing over the abyss, these three Ossianic masses resemble the phantoms of ages. In northern Scotland, the old red sandstone is the framework in which lie embedded the crystalline rocks; or, to speak more correctly, it is the rough mantle cast round the shoulders of these giants. Such an association of antiquities imparts to this country a striking appearance, while, if you inquire the age of these mountains, the interest produced by these marvellous scenes of nature is soon associated with an historic contemplation of time. The Grampian chain, composed of gneiss and granite, but surrounded by a belt of old red sandstone, is more ancient than the Alps, the Appennines, the Pyrences, and the Carpathians; for, at the period when it was upheaved, the greater portion of Europe was but an undefined ocean.

In England, each geological province has its historian, and they have shared between them the old empire of Neptune. In England, Murchison and Sedgwick, in Scotland, the late Hugh Miller, attached themselves to the monuments of the Devonian age.

After passing his youth in wandering amid rocks and forests, reading curious books, and gleaning old stories and traditions, Hugh Miller, at about the age of twenty, entered a quarry as workman. The place where he worked was to

the south of an estuary formed by the mouth of a river: a bright stream of water on one side, a dense wood on the other, forbade all access. It was in the silence of these ruins that he saw the fossils of the Devonian age fall amid the fragments of old red sandstone. The workman's hammer thus became the magic wand by the aid of which the apprentice in geology made the extinct population of the seas, whose history these old rocks preserved, come to life again.

He saw that the old red sandstone fossils were very numerous, and far better preserved than he at first fancied: that they appeared in distinct groups, by stages of existence, following an admirable progression, and that they were the remnants of creatures whose type was lost in present nature. The Devonian age was specially that of fish: fantastic and strange beings, balls bristling with thorns, living boats with oars and rudder, shelly fins, enamel integuments of the finest porcelain,—all announced a period of the greatest antiquity, a time whose forms have passed out of fashion. His wanderings in this old field of nature brought every day to light one of the inhabitants of the primeval Caledonian seas: to-day, the *pterichtys*, that aspired to enter the bird family: to-morrow, the *cephalaspis*, with its long tail fastened to a crescent-shaped head covered with a heavy shield.

Did the Devonian creation stop with fishes?

No. For the first time a reptile is seen, the *Telerpeton Elginense*, of which a solitary specimen was found a few years back in the upper red sandstone regions at Elgin, to the south of the mouth of the Murray. We may regard this solitary reptile as the harbinger of the great lizards which will arrive at a later date to inhabit Great Britain. It was a creature before its time, and, according to Hugh Miller, the age which deposited the old red sandstone was followed by a period of death. Time passed, and threw over the countless corpses a muddy sediment, which buried them like November's snow effaces the autumn vegetation. During this interval, the waters of the desolate sea seem to have been without animal life: presently, a few shells and bones of fish reappear: but these fish must have been few in number, judging by their remains, *rari nantes in gurgite vasto.*

Let us return to South Wales. At certain spots the traveller sees all around him mountains of red sandstone, but if he look at the southern slopes of these mountains, he sees from a distance the rocks bulged out by masses of another hue: it is the transition between the Devonian era and the carboniferous age, the limit between the two geological provinces. The carboniferous rocks are boldly developed in the vast basins of Glamorgan, Caermarthen, and Monmouth. This formation has also a grand character; on some coasts it up-

heaves rocks of cyclopean aspect, which present a wild and picturesque barrier to the sea; but it is chiefly in Ireland and Derbyshire that this order of ruins exerts a marked influence on the scenery.

There is probably no country in the world where the carboniferous system is so rich in rocks and so poor in coal as Ireland. The great fields of combustible matter which rest on the carboniferous limestone as a basis, and which are so productive in England and Scotland, never existed in Ireland, or, if so, were swept away by destructive agencies. The want of mineral wealth in old Erin is compensated by the marvellous beauty of the scenery. In Derbyshire, the carboniferous rocks also rise in rugged, haughty, and fantastic mountains; their peaks are mingled with the light white clouds which are caught and rent by them. The picturesque nature of the formation is specially seen in the dales. The celebrated cavern, known as Peak's Cavern, or the Devil's Cave, is one of the most extraordinary and magnificent works of nature. The entrance is grand; on either side, enormous grey rocks tower perpendicularly, while, on the left, a stream, which rises in the cavern, foams and rolls over fragments of broken rock. The mouth of the cavern is inhabited by poor people, who sell candles to the visitor, and serve as his guide. Their clumsy huts and rope walks, which resemble gibbets erected one after the other, produce in this clear-

obscure a singular effect, harmonising with the dramatic character of the scene. You have scarce entered the vestibule ere the roof lowers, and an incline brings you to the entrance of the inner gallery. Here the light of day, which has gradually waned to twilight, disappears, and the torches are lit to indicate your road in the gloom of the cavern. You walk with bent back, through low and narrow passages, to a lake called First Water. A little wicker boat, in which the visitor lies down, carries him thence, under a massive arch of rocks, to a vast bell-shaped cavity, which, when illumined, produces a marvellous effect. This cavern has many subterranean branches running in various directions, and in this catacomb of nature repose the countless remains of extinct beings.

The limestone mountains, the basis of the coal system, attain in Great Britain the considerable thickness of eight hundred and fifty yards, and are exclusively of marine origin, which fact is indicated by the multitude of fossils found in it; of zoophites, radiata, cephalopods, and fishes. All reveals that life thronged the waters. The carboniferous age saw new species born; it also saw old families disappear; as, for instance, the *trilobites*, which are never met with again. Such is the invariable progress of nature: after having contained for some time the mysteries of life, the organised forms are worn out and die, and in the place of these broken vessels, of which we find the scat-

tered fragments on the soil, other moulds are constructed to receive the sacred deposit. The principal feature of the carboniferous formation is that it contains, in great abundance, the primary traces, or nearly so, of the terrestrial flora. These vegetable remains soon become as common as they were rare in the preceding ages, and announce an increment of soil. There was a time, as we have seen, when Great Britain was a boundless sea; there was also another when it was a forest, or rather a group of forests growing on the surface of small scattered islands.

The evidences of this great forest epoch are found in the rich coal-beds of England and Scotland. We can form there an idea of the riches of the garment gradually covering the nakedness of the earth, which had newly arisen from the bosom of the waters. It was the earthly paradise of vegetation; the great sigillaria, the stigmaria, and before all the typical plant of that age, the tree-fern, formed forests, whose dumb solitudes no mammiferous animal yet disturbed. Everything evidences that the temperature was warm, damp, and nearly uniform. In the conifera of that epoch concentric rings have been traced, leading to the supposition that seasons existed; but these rings are more lightly marked than in the present trees of that family, whence it is reasonable to believe that the annual changes of temperature were less sensible than they are now.

Everything indicates that the duration of the

carboniferous age was prodigious. Professor Phillips has calculated that, according to the present state of things, it would require 122,400 years merely to accumulate sixty feet of coal. English geologists believe that the upper coal-beds, where the strata are piled on each other, like ages on ages, were formed under conditions relatively tranquil; but that the end of this period was marked by ruptures of the earth's crust. At that epoch the coal masses were gradually broken, dislocated, and hurled into separate basins. On this theatre of ruins, we enter a fourth age of nature, the Permian era, which has left but few signs in England. It formed, however, in Derbyshire and Yorkshire, accumulations of dolomite, an excellent variety of stone, of which the Houses of Parliament were built.

As they trend northward the Permian ranges rise to a great height, but they are generally poor in fossil *débris*. Most of the primitive types of life disappear, while those which survive are modified. English geologists regard this era as an epoch of decadence, or, at any rate, of transition. In the Permian rocks may be noticed the imprint of paws, apparently indicating that, amid the decline of other animal forms, the race of reptiles increased. The traces of this troubled and agitated epoch are not so thoroughly effaced, however, as might be supposed, for sandstones have been found in England on which the ancient

waves have left their ripple mark: hence there were tides; on other stone tablets small hollows have been noticed, made by heavy drops of rain at a period when the soft sand, which eventually hardened into stone, was deposited on the shore. At times these hollows have lips higher on one side than the other, as happens to-day on our shores when the rain is driven in any particular direction by the wind. We know, therefore, that at that time the sky was covered with clouds; but we have, in addition, under our own eyes, the memorial of the wind, and the quarter whence it blew, at a season when man did not exist to observe the phenomena of the weather, and there was no other hand to note them than that of nature.

We have seen the seas, vast deserts of water, become populated; we have seen the first land grow and increase, ages succeed, and nature progress amid the ruins; the old denizens of the seas, or at least their relics, have been raised to the tops of the highest mountains. Amid these vast cemeteries of the primeval world, we have met with myriads of beings, entire species, sacrificed to the development of life. Here we end the first groups of facts constituting the infancy of the British Isles; but greater changes have yet to be effected on the surface of this portion of the earth.

CHAPTER III.

NEW RED SANDSTONE ROCKS—THE VALLEY OF LYME REGIS—THE PORTLAND QUARRIES—THE CHALK COUNTRY—KENT—THE INHABITANTS OF GREAT BRITAIN DURING THIS SECOND GEOLOGICAL AGE—PERIOD OF TRANSITION—RICHARD OWEN.

THE central geological age is represented in Great Britain by three perfectly distinct deposits, the new red sandstone, the oolite, and the chalk, in which the chronicles of life have been preserved, and which impart to the scenery a peculiar outline and hue. The variety of natural landscape in England depends on the mineralogical variety of the substratum.

The new red sandstone, surmounted by speckled marl, occupies a considerable extent in the midland counties. Narrow and deep ravines, intersected by platforms, frequently of remarkable elevation; precipices, so perpendicular and red, that they resemble a wall built of new bricks; now and then, among the spotted gravel covered by no lichen, a great mass of moss-clad lime, standing upright like a Druidic altar, and bearing evi-

dence of a more remote antiquity than the rocks that surround it—such is generally the character of the scenery. The appearance of this formation, however, is neither so striking nor so bold as that of the primitive eras; and the eye seeks in vain those stern, scarped, and abrupt granitic rocks, which, inserted in the Silurian beds, give the mountains of northern England a Titanic character.

Still, this series of sandstone does not the less supply art and trade with materials of the highest importance. Nearly all the feudal castles and old abbeys which, beneath their mantle of ivy, defy the teeth of time, were built of stone obtained from old sandstone quarries found in their vicinity. The rain, far from destroying them, has, on the contrary, cemented the parts of these indestructible walls, whose age is known. Though the history of these ruins may be so instructive, I prefer, however, that of the rocks themselves.

The present masses of red sandstone formed the sandy bed of an ancient sea, not so deep as those of the preceding ages, and whose rising banks were trodden by strange reptiles, in which the characteristics of the Batrachians are found combined with those of the crocodiles and lizards. The most astonishing thing about these creatures, in which all is extraordinary, is their size: just imagine a frog as large as a wild boar! Their traces offer a singular resemblance to the imprint which would be left on the sand by the palm

of the human hand—fingers and thumb being stretched out. In the quarry at Corncockle Muir (Dumfriesshire), the Rev. Dr. Duncan was the first to discover the imprint of a tortoise on pieces of flat and sloping marble, clearly indicating the surface of an ancient shore. The animal passed over them on its daily visits to the sea. Such vestiges of reptile footsteps are found more numerously in the new red sandstone than in the preceding soils; they announce the dawn of a reign in which we shall discover gigantic forms.

There are important quarries in the valley of Lyme Regis, in the midst of lias. (Lias constitutes in England a geological province formed by muddy accumulations in a calm sea, and enormous rocks of it may be seen in the cuttings of the railway running through Dorset.) In these quarries the most frightful creatures the world ever saw sleep their stony sleep; these great sepulchres have been opened, and these dragons of the ancient seas appeared.

The Lyme Regis quarries are the principal cemetery of the *ichthyosaurus*, or fish-lizard. This leviathan, with its huge eye surrounded by a briny disc, is one of the first oceanic giants that emerged. There is probably no extinct reptile whose habits, deduced from organic characters, are better known at the present day than those of the ichthyosaurus. The animal lived in deep water, but sought the shores at intervals; it clam-

bered up the beach, covered by a soft skin, resembling that of our cetaceans, for the ichthyosaurus was the whale of its time. Its voracity was prodigious. Dr. Buckland found beneath the ribs of a fossil specimen, at the spot where the stomach should be, proofs that the monster was not satisfied with living on its weaker neighbour, but devoured its own species. By the side of it lived the *plesiosaurus*, or long neck, whose form appears to us in the present day chimerical; it might be called the phantasm of a dream. Lords of ocean, the ichthyosaurus and plesiosaurus basked in the same sun, on the old banks where grew tall arundinaceæ, bamboos, and palms, remains of which have been found, and testify that the climate of England at that time resembled the present climate of Africa. These terrible rivals fought and devoured each other; but of all this strange creation, which evidences that nature had, like humanity, its fabulous age, the most extraordinary being is the *pterodactylus*, the bat of primeval nights; it flew, dived, swam, crawled, and walked, like one of the demons of Paradise Lost: for it had an equal share in the air, the land, and the sea. On seeing these marvellous legends of nature, you experience in the Dorsetshire quarries a feeling of admiration, terror, and discomfort. When you reflect that all these creatures once existed, and believe, with Lyell, that they might all come to life again, if changes in

an inverse ratio to those which formed the surface of the British Isles brought back the same climate and the same conditions of life, you fancy you see the pterodactylus opening its vampire wings in the gloom.

From Yorkshire, in the north-east, to Dorset, in the south-west, there runs across England, with an average width of thirty miles, another system of rocks which imparts a new physiognomy to this region. I refer to the oolitic rocks. Gentler slopes, valleys intersected by streams, and covered by rich vegetation produce what is called a tame landscape, in opposition to the rude and wild character of the primitive land. This formation no longer surprises, but pleases; and among these masses of oolite are several quarries that supply excellent building materials, especially those of Bath, whose stone becomes harder on exposure to the atmosphere, and those of Portland.

Portland island rises to a considerable height above the level of the sea. To the west extends an horizontal line of pebbles, gloomy and desolate, without vegetation, trees, houses, or inhabitants: the Chesil bank, connecting the island with England. The quarries are situated on the north of the island, and there are at least fifty of them. The strata lying over the oolite are of a sombre and yellowish colour, and are burned to make lime. The succeeding bed is of a white colour, and more agreeable to the eye; and is excavated

for architectural purposes. The portico of St. Paul's Cathedral, and several buildings erected in the reign of Queen Anne were built of this stone. English geologists have drawn attention to the fact that the old edifices were built of stone far superior to that of the present day, at least as far as durability was concerned. At that time neither labour nor expense was spared to conquer the hardness of the raw material, which ensures life to works of art. The Portland quarries are, however, the cause of considerable trade, and in 1855 the quantity of stone put on the railway amounted to 22,995 tons.

These Portland quarries, in which men are waging a productive war with the stubborn rocks, are also interesting from another point of view: for an example is found there of the formidable changes the surface of the earth appears to have undergone in ancient times. The layer of building stone contains organic *débris* which are exclusively marine. Upon it rests a limestone bed which must have been formed by lacustrine waters; and, lastly, over this bed extends a stratum of bluish stuff, which is supposed to have been old vegetable soil, and which the miners call by the name of "dirt-bed." A great number of petrified tropical trees and plants are lying in it: the ruins of a forest upon the ruins of an ocean. The trunks of these trees are frequently found upright, hence they must have been petrified

while growing. It has hence been concluded that the region now occupied by the British Channel and the adjacent coasts was at first a sea, on the bed of which accumulated the oolitic deposits which now supply Portland stone. The bed of this sea gradually rose and reached the light, but on the ground which thus emerged plants had already begun to grow, and formed a layer of vegetable soil—the dirt-bed. This soil, with the trees that rose to the surface, again sank into the waters, not into the bitter ocean, but into the sweet water of a lake formed by the mouth of a large river. As time went on, an alluvial soil, deposited by the matter the river brought down, covered the dirt-bed, and at length, separated by some internal convulsion, the whole region was again swallowed up, until the day when, owing to successive changes and deposits, Portland island rose once more and took up the position it now occupies in the straits.

While the Portland quarries tell the history of the variations of soil, those of Stonesfield, so rich in fossils, contain the chronicles of life. The arrival of the great reptiles on the surface of the British Isles is recorded there with the same regularity as the successive generations of a ruling house in ancient history. The vast oolitic pyramids contain the relics of the *megalosaurus*, or giant lizard, which, more fortunate than the old Egyptian kings, of whom Bossuet speaks, at least

enjoyed its tomb. The skeleton of this animal has not been found entire; but the bones have been discovered in a perfect state of preservation, and comparative anatomists have reproduced the shape and history of this monster, which was one of the destructive gods of its epoch. The megalosaurus was carnivorous, and all the terrors the fancy can summon up were combined in these depopulators of the sea—a coat of armour of prodigious strength, a capacity of stomach exceeding that of the largest crocodile, and teeth which evidence a ferocious appetite. We tremble at the thought of the millions of beings which must have been swallowed in this living and gaping gulf.

Another creature of these heroic times was the *teleosaurus*, and this reptile bore some resemblance to the alligator of the Ganges. As its remains have only been found in sedimentary ground, the conclusion has been arrived at that the ancient British alligator was more strictly marine than the sharp-snouted crocodile of the Hindoos. Reptiles abounded: they fought afloat and ashore: it was their age; but in the stone-fields where the effaced beings of the book of life have left their remains, one discovery especially astonished naturalists. There are found, for the first time, bones of an animal which, like our hedgehog, lived on insects, and, like the American opossum, had a pouch under its stomach to receive its young. According to

the geologists who admit the development of life, this singular being, the most ancient of known mammifera, was the precursor of their reign. The Marsupial family, of which the *phascolotherium* is the natural ally, or, if you will, the precursor, is at the present day confined to New South Wales or Van Diemen's land. The Araucanian pines now abound in Australia as they abounded in England at the period whose memory the Stonesfield quarries have perpetuated. It is also in the Australian waters that the fish and shells are found which most resemble those of the oolitic seas. Hence a chronology of climates exists in the interior of the earth. Passing through the ancient history of our planet is like ascending and descending the degrees of temperature which succeed each other, according to the latitude and longitude, on the present surface of the globe.

If we now traverse that portion of England running from Yorkshire to the end of Kent, nature entirely changes around us,—the physiognomy of the plains and mountains, the colour of the rocks, the character of the vegetation (always dependent on the subsoil), the race of domestic animals, and the mode of life among the inhabitants. We here enter the chalk country, and there are few geological formations whose features can be so easily recognised. Long lines presenting the appearance of coasts extend into the interior, whence spring up mounds after mounds,

with their rounded tops, at the foot of which undulate plains, either wooded or covered with rich crops. At times valleys are hollowed out without the aid of water, crowned by sterile and uneven downs, which seem to heave and fall like the sea after a storm. Frequently the top of the hills has been more or less denuded, and the appearance of these white masses, which rend the curtain of verdure, contrasts with the rocks which are rugged, broken, abrupt, and shapeless. In Oxford, the Chiltern Hundreds, a group of chalk hills, were formerly covered with wood and clumps of beeches, which served as a shelter for bands of robbers. Wheresoever water is present this formation produces a delicious landscape, as may be witnessed at the village of Selborne, in Hampshire.

It is before all in Kent, however, surnamed the Garden of England, that the beauties of this scenery should be studied. I remember an evening walk at Abbey Wood, an old abbey and an old wood, whose last trees grow on the back of a hill. The setting sun had left on the horizon a large spot of blood at that portion of the sky where it disappeared. The Thames, that grand and wide stream, on which floated spectral ships, with all sails set, was flowing steadily to the sea. Further on in the rising mist were the wooded heights of Essex, while, in the midst of this majesty of space, a serpent of smoke was softly

unrolling its white rings on the other shore, and the movement of the train recalled the thought of a great city: London was passing before me.

If you follow the road to Gravesend, the scenery becomes still more varied: on your right puff up like enormous mushrooms the chalky protuberances, whose dome supports woods, villages, and mansions; on the left stretch out the hop gardens, the Northern vines, the Saxon thyrsi, mingled with orchards of cherry or other fruit trees, or intersected by meadows, in which young girls with naked arms and little bonnets pulled over their faces are raking the hay together. All along the road are churches, schools, cottages, some rustic and white with chalk, others built of brick, or, better still, of round pebbles set in a frame of woodwork, after the style of the Elizabethan era. At various spots, the dyke that conceals the Thames is rent asunder, and between the openings you discover vast green and flat plains, reminding you of the Dutch polders with their herds of oxen. At Gravesend, a pleasure garden, Rosherville, has been formed in an old chalk-pit; the white rocks, formerly assailed by the hammer, rise haughtily, like a ruined citadel, in the midst of a wood. From their heights a magnificent prospect may be enjoyed; the river, which is approaching its mouth, forms a species of gulf, in which ships expand their wings, made by human hands, like great aquatic birds. From

Gravesend to Rochester, and thence to Maidstone, the scene changes its character: it was peaceful, but it now becomes grand. Rochester and its old Norman castle—one of the finest historical monuments in Britain—stand on the banks of the Medway, which are backed up by a group of hills of more decided form, which emerge, as it were, from the river, and whose white flanks are covered with a stunted vegetation; but it is specially towards the Channel coast that the masses of solid chalk are developed into a chain of cliffs whence old Albion derives her name. These rocks, of a snowy appearance, visible at a considerable distance, have served from time immemorial as landmarks to guide the mariner to the English coast.

Margate, where the Clifton baths have been dug out of the chalk, with cavernous passages and subterraneous chambers, is already a type of that formation, which extends from hill to hill, though intersected by abrupt ravines. You should behold these piles of chalk on a stormy day, as they stand out white beneath the black sky, and are at intervals lit up by the lightning flashes. From the sea especially the spectacle is sublime. At Dover you should survey by moonlight the mount on which old Dover Castle is built, to the east of the town, and which rises perpendicularly from the bosom of the gloomy and agitated waters to a height of more than three hundred feet. Separated from the neighbouring mountains by deep

valleys and abrupt declivities, it forms a bold promontory, where a magnificent view may be had. Beneath it is Shakspeare's Cliff, standing over the sea, like the genius of the old dramatic poet over the gulf of ages. From Dover to Folkestone the chalk escarpments continue, and these masses, when seen under certain effects of light, produce a marvellous and almost formidable impression.

There is in Kent a great number of chalk-pits; this natural product is used, in some districts, to improve the land, and it is also converted into lime. The simplicity of the mode of extraction contrasts with the processes employed in the stone quarries. At a short distance from Woolwich a little wood stands pleasantly enough on a hill-slope whose base displays, beneath a belt of sand, masses of chalk running into unknown depths. Grottos and caverns in which the gipsies light fires are hollowed out of these white and friable rocks. At the foot of the wood is a pit worked by a single man: week after week he attacks the strata of chalk and throws the produce of his toil into the kiln. Nearly at every stroke his pick comes against the fragments of an animal world, and he collects the best fossils and places them in a basket. This workman is a species of philosopher: he puts on his working dress in a room he has hollowed out of the rock: when it rains, he withdraws there, and indeed sometimes sleeps in it. At Charlton and Greenhithe there are, how-

ever, very much larger pits, which employ a considerable number of workmen. The latter live near the pits in small cottages whose walls are adorned with natural casts, with imprints of what has lived, and witnesses of the past age of creation, far preferable to those plaster figures generally found in the poor man's abode. If an amateur present himself, they will sell some of these fossils to obtain a little pocket-money. The ruinous appearance of the pits themselves is not without character: the clumsy pillars, the excavations, the blocks torn down and thrown over, the walls of sand laid bare, the motion of the chalk-laden waggons in the tramways, the workmen white with the dust of ages—all this forms a curious scene to which a scientific interest is added.

How did these prodigious piles of chalk, which now surround Southern England, and present a belt of ramparts against wind and wave, become accumulated? We have still before us the bed of an ancient sea: it is as if a mass of two thousand feet in thickness were now to rise from the bottom of the Atlantic. It has been discovered that the chalk owed its origin to life. Each particle of these enormous piles formerly circulated in the veins of certain animals or in the organs of plants that grew and multiplied in the cretacean seas. Microscopic shells, of which a cubic inch of chalk contains ten millions, polypodoms and testaceans

pounded and reduced to dust, formed, by their decomposition, that immense group of chalk strata which are now found on the surface of the earth: the infinitely-little built mountains. In these millions on millions of beings, in these entire species sacrificed in the course of time to the progress of creation, we find, if we may use the expression, the cradle of life: these relics enriched the surface of the earth and furnished the origin of newly organised beings, for, in the general system of nature, destruction itself is fruitful. The Kent chalk also contains innumerable pebbles arranged in parallel strata, and, frequently, flattened veins of flint. These pebbles, of strange and capricious shape, black beneath their white covering, are collected to pave ponds, or adorn garden walks or the fronts of houses: and this is frequently the poor man's sole luxury. The chalk flints are not unknown to trade besides, and they are used in the manufacture of glass and pottery.

This last innovation was the result of accident. In 1720, a Staffordshire potter, proceeding to London, noticed there was something the matter with his horse's eyes; he consulted the ostler of the inn where he lodged, and the latter placed in the fire a piece of pebble which he made red hot, and after throwing it into water, reduced it into a white powder, a small quantity of which he blew into the horse's eyes. This was a ray of light for the potter: Ashbury (that was his

name) sent some of these pebbles to Shelton, where they were calcined and pulverised. By mixing this powder with pipeclay, he obtained a successful result, and the process spread in the course of time through the potteries.

Chalk is marvellously rich in fossils. Any one who glances for a while in this field of ruins will find a great number of shells, madrepores, crustaceans, and fish of a higher order than those in the previous eras. The reptiles are drawing to their period of decadence: the great saurians have disappeared, and the crocodiles, more or less terrestrial, are beginning to diminish in numbers. Still they attain noble proportions in the *mosasaurus*, which appears to have been thirty-five feet in length, and whose tail helped the animal in swimming. The pterodactyle is still seen; and the largest specimens of this flying dragon were lately discovered in a chalk-pit at Barham, in Kent; but it has reached the limits of its powers. The life of the animal species is restricted in time as in space. We have, therefore, finished, or nearly so, not only with the pterodactyle, but also with those amazing reptiles of the lias and oolite, which we might fancy created by nature when suffering from a nightmare. Let us, however, dismiss the idea of a prodigy at the sight of these apparently improbable remains, for these monsters were not so for their epoch. In the same way as in the present state of things, extraordinary animals

announce eccentric countries, so the reptiles of the old ages were adapted to the conditions of a world differing from ours. From them we can form an idea of the media in which they lived.

The chalk strata are covered in Kent by enormous beds of sand. At times the sides of a hill have been denuded by old ravages, and you then see, while standing in a funnel-shaped and umbrageous valley, a wall of yellow ochre rising before you, more or less fissured, to which blackberry bushes cling. From these sand precipices solid blocks are now and then detached, which roll into the ravine, and on which children and shepherds sit, little suspecting that these rocks are old petrified trees, often falling at the feet of a living wood. Their *débris* are so abundant that in certain parts they are broken up and used to mend the roads. Some of these trees were formerly torn up by the roots, and they must have remained a long time in water, for shells are found buried in their bark. Some branches still bear the traces of the worm or mollusc that gnawed them: it was the teredo. We have thus a proof that these branches floated for a long time on the surface of the water ere they were buried in the sand or mud. There are other spots where these masses of sand, lying over the chalk, have been laid bare by man's handiwork.

I saw at New Charlton perfect sand quarries which might be taken for the ruins of a Baby-

lonish city. The sand is sold, according to its quality, at from four to seven shillings a ton; it is employed in the potteries to make moulds for anchors, and other molten work, as well as to ballast ships. Such deposits indicate that the surface of the chalk, after consolidation, was long exposed to the erosive action of fresh water. The piles of sand covering it are the beds of old rivers, or more correctly lakes situated at the mouths of great rivers, which have sullied or covered by this sediment, so rich in fossil remains, the immaculate surface of the chalk itself, the winding-sheet of ancient marine beings. But in order to witness the result of this long period of nature we must proceed to a fresh scene.

Along the surface of Kent and Sussex runs a long valley called the Weald (a wild and uncultivated country), which has given its name to a geological province, the Wealden. The origin of this formation is owing to a great delta: the manner in which the remains of terrestrial animals are found scattered in the Wealden, and the commingling of pebbles like those which our streams now roll down, tell us sufficiently that the mouths of a great river like the Amazon and the Mississippi, at that time covered the south-western portion of England. But where was the continent that fed this great river. "Here," says Lyell, "I should be tempted to believe in the ancient existence of Plato's Atlantis." You might fancy

yourself transported to the world of dreams, and yet modern science, based on the most certain data, declares that continents also perish. After rising from the bed of ocean, lands may be worn away by the action of the waters, and swallowed up again, but new countries are formed of these ruins.

In the stony masses of the Wealden are found the remains of a new reptile, the *iguanodon.* In the spring of 1822, the wife of a physician at Lewes was walking along the picturesque paths of Tingate Wood, when she discovered in the rocks of an old chalk-pit an object which she thought might interest her husband, Dr. Mantell. This distinguished geologist perceived that the fossils noticed by his wife were the teeth of a large extinct animal. He was fortunately enabled to clear up any doubts on the subject, for, during twenty years, bones and teeth of the iguanodon, which had belonged, according to his calculation, to seventy-seven individuals, passed through Dr. Mantell's hands: it was really an herbivorous animal. The exhumation of these giants, which see the light again, after so many thousands of ages, beneath the now pallid sky of Great Britain, gives rise to interesting scenes in the quarries.

In May, 1834, the workmen in a chalk-pit near Shanklin drew the attention of the owner, Mr. Benstead, to what they supposed to be petrified wood. On investigation he saw that what they

took for wood was really bones, and as the cyclopean relics were scattered over a block of very hard stone, it required more than a month's work to liberate them. This specimen is now in the British Museum.

I have sought to show how far the general events of our planet exercised a particular and local influence on Great Britain. The three groups distributed in large belts through the centre and south of England—namely, the new red sandstone, the oolite, and the chalk—constitute, in spite of very distinct features, an assemblage of rocks, to which an animal form—that of the reptile—imparts the stamp of unity. What was the physiognomy, however, of the British Isles during the reign of these extraordinary beings, whose dynasty is about to expire? To answer such a question, we must seek, on the present surface of the globe, a spot which possesses nearly the same relative conditions of life. The British Isles would at that time have resembled a group of small islands now situated below the equator to the west of the Peruvian coast, and which have been called the "Reptile Islands," owing to the great number of serpents, lizards, and tortoises congregated there. If, as there is reason for believing, modern climates are only old conditions of things fixed and localised, this archipelago is the spot which has best preserved the features of its youth. England, like those hot and low isles, was a bo

in which grew calamites and other marsh plants now extinct. Among them lived a population of reptiles; the crocodiles of that era, lizards, and monstrous tortoises buried themselves in the damp jungle; England was a gloomy morass, compared with which the Pontine Marshes would be salubrious. In this unwholesome swâmp, healthy for them, however, and favourable to the development of an aquatic flora, as well as the growth of certain gigantic trees, these monsters wallowed in the sun; there they carried on their amours, and waged internecine war; while one of them traversed the air, which was peopled by a multitude of insects. Birds had appeared on earth, and among them was the gigantic *dinornis*, with its short wings, like our ostriches, but whose size exceeded that of the camel. All the denizens of the old British Isles and seas have found their historian in Mr. Richard Owen. What we might be tempted to regard as a romance of nature is, in truth a history, based on facts no less certain than those of Livy and Tacitus. Most of the extinct animals wrote their autobiography on stone leaves; to die without disappearing, to leave the form existing—that dream of the ambitious—was realised by these crawling and brutal creatures. The world, of which they form the principal features, existed; the sun and the stars that illumine us saw it; the sea saw it, and left on it the ripple mark of its tide; the bowels of the

earth saw and remember it. This world is about to end, and with it the denizens that animated it. Such is the general progress of nature: the animal families begin feebly, almost experimentally; they rise in the ensuing ages to the zenith of their development; then, after having for some time held the sceptre of living creation, they are blotted out again, leaving behind them on the earth only obscure representatives of their old power.

The end of that world which English geologists have called the mezozoic seems to have been marked by ravages. On the surface of the chalk masses the traces of a period of dissolution, though slow in its nature, have been found. The English school accuse Cuvier of having misunderstood the action of causes infinitely small but infinitely repeated. This power once neglected, he was compelled to exaggerate the character of the old cataclysms. The defect of this system is, it is asserted, that it brings facts too closely together, which must have occurred at a great distance from each other. Amid these changes, in which old worlds only appeared to be crushed, and organised beings came to light to fall back again into eternal night, the chain of causes which prepared these grand revolutions of life was lost. The most minute studies have proved that the middle age of the earth was not terminated at a stroke. British science prefers at the present day to re-

cognise in time the hand of the Creator. Years on years, ages after ages have slowly let these graves of dust fall on those sand deposits which in England cover the chalk formation.

It was also believed, in the infancy of geological knowledge, that there was at the end of this period an annihilation of all created beings, followed by an entire renewal of life, but this theory is at the present day generally abandoned. Animal nature has, it is true, undergone a considerable change, and we have yet to study the character of that change; but if there be a fact on which the scientific men of Great Britain can agree, it is that there never was at any period a solution of continuity. Many new species, on the contrary, lived on the surface of the British Isles with others that were dying out. The morning of one species came in contact with the evening of the others. The creation does not recommence, it continues, and the tomb of the ending world is the cradle of the new-born world.

CHAPTER IV.

THE LONDON BASIN—THE BONE CAVERNS—TRACES OF THE GLACIAL EPOCH—TERRACES ALONG THE SEA-COAST—INHABITANTS OF GREAT BRITAIN DURING THE VARIOUS PERIODS OF THE LAST FORMATION—RECENT CHANGES THAT HAVE OCCURRED IN THE PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY OF ENGLAND—SIR CHARLES LYELL—INFLUENCE OF THE GEOLOGICAL EVENTS ON THE SOCIAL HISTORY OF GREAT BRITAIN.

EIGHT miles from London is a height called Shooters Hill, which does not possess the rocky and wild character of the mountains met with in Wales, Devonshire, or even Derbyshire. The country it commands also offers a pleasing contrast with the grand, though desolate, regions formed by the old seas. The top of Shooters Hill, occupied by pretty country-houses, by parks, gardens, and a church, surveys an ocean of verdure, in which trees form large waves, and which extends for an enormous distance. To the right, amid the windings of the Thames, London appears with its buildings like the dream of a city. Woolwich, with its houses, barracks, docks, arsenal, and brick obelisks, is platooned at the foot of the hill. To the left are villages, fields,

displaying the labour of man and the hopes of the harvest, woods, commons, and vast uncultivated heaths, in which the poor of the parish lead a few sheep, a donkey, at times an old horse, to pasture. This horizon of verdure is the true type of an English landscape, and the vicinity of Shooters Hill has had the honour of being described by Lord Byron in Don Juan.

The tertiary deposits have not that vast extension that distinguishes the secondary and especially the primary formation, and which gives the landscape a character of grand uniformity. Here the variety of scenes succeeding each other, the horizon with its quiet lines, the green belt of downs, all rejoice the lovers of classical scenery. The manners of the inhabitants change with the physiognomy of the country: while in the ancient rocks we found traces of a pastoral life, on the rich plains and on the smiling slopes of a more recent geological province an agricultural life is preferred. The temperature itself is no less influenced by the age and nature of the substratum, than by the degrees of the meridian. The primitive rocks oppose their dense and impenetrable surface to the admission of the rain into the ground, while the porous strata of sand or gravel eagerly suck up the refreshing moisture; the result is that the former increase the cold humidity of the atmosphere by producing evaporation. At Shooters Hill and its vicinity, works opened

to the sky take the place of subterraneous mines; artificial rendings of the soil display in the sides of the hills a red or yellowish clay, converted into tracks by the hands of the workmen. All tells us that we have before us a fresh phase of created things—a new world.

In the time of Cuvier, the tertiary formation, or the *renaissance* of life, was regarded as a chaos of superficial deposits, which could not be referred to distinct epochs. An eminent English geologist, Sir C. Lyell, has thrown light, however, on this darkness. Before this gentleman and Sir R. Murchison, geology was a bridge, traversing a portion of the great tide of eternity, the first and last arches of which were hidden by a dense fog; now-a-days, this cloud is rent asunder, and has allowed the secrets of old Nature to be read. By the mere study of the shells, those medals struck with the effigy of the successive temperatures of the globe, Sir Charles Lyell has separated the tertiary epoch into three divisions: the *eocene* age, or the dawn of modern creation; the *miocene*, or intermediate; and the *pliocene*, or last.

The first, or eocene formation, is principally represented in the London and Hampshire basins by a group of clayey or sandy soils. Some of these masses attain a height of more than a thousand feet, and thus testify to the depth of the waters, in turn fresh and salt, in the midst of which they were deposited. In them are found

the bones of the crocodile and tortoise, a great quantity of plants, fruits, and grains, cocoa-nuts, mimosas, acacias, and ebony-trees, which announce a climate something like that of the sub-tropical countries in the present day. To the north of the Isle of Wight have also been found the fossil remains of the *anoplotherium*, the *palæotherium*, the *chæropotamus*, the *dichobunus*, all animals which announce the vicinity of large tracts of land. In the previous ages, we saw the dawn of the mammifera appear and disappear, but in the heart of the chalk and other soils succeeding the oölite, although an incalculable space of time elapsed, there is no trace of their existence; now they show themselves again, and within a short period they will cumber the soil with their remains. By the character of these various denizens, always so well adapted to the various media in which they are destined to live, we can learn the more prominent features of the surface of England at the period when they flourished.

There were at that time shallow seas thronged with the humble forms of animal life; islands covered with old clumps of palms, on the banks of which tortoises basked in the sun; mouths of rivers, vast basins of fresh or brackish water in which the influence of the tide was felt, and which must have abounded with sharks; rivers in which crocodiles swarmed; forests which served as refuge to numerous quadrupeds, and serpents of the

size of the boa constrictor; fresh-water lakes which received into their tranquil depths the remains of numerous testaceans, and which the progress of time eventually converted into flowing rivers. The characteristic feature of this tertiary formation is the growth of land. While the rocks of the preceding ages were deposited in open seas, we have here strata of a lacustrine origin, and frequently fresh water beds alternating with marine sediments. At the same time the group of ancient islands became connected, and this junction produced small continents with lakes, bays, and probably internal seas.

By the study of soils and fossils, science does not only resuscitate animals, it also reconstructs the scene on which these great existences were passed; but, in the reappearance of the eocene world, one fact specially deserves attention. From the British basin, the vast estuary of an ancient river the continent of which is lost, do you perceive in the geological map of Europe another basin which, separated by an arm of the sea, received the overflow of a chain of lakes imprisoned in the mountains of what was afterwards Gaul? One day, the former of these basins will be London, the latter Paris. The two great cities of the two great modern nations, rivals in industry as in war, came into distant contact, beneath the identical action of natural causes, like Romulus and Remus under the she-wolf. London and

Paris are now built on two basins of the same age, in which the same shells are found: the future character of the two capitals is even indicated by the nature of their cradle. In the basin of Paris huge masses of coarse limestone and gypsum were found, and employed to build the edifices, houses, and quays, while the London basin, principally rich in clay, furnished scanty materials to architecture. You will have thus on one side a city of stone or plaster, on the other a city of brick.

The central tertiary or miocene formation is but slightly represented in England: English geologists have, therefore, filled up this gap with loans they obtained from both hemispheres. You may see in the British Museum the model of an enormous skeleton of the *dinotherium* and *mastodon;* but the plan I have laid down for my study only permits me to attend to the history of facts that actually occurred on British soil.

During this period of transition the page of the book of life was turned over again by the breath of time. New creatures had seen light: the old lakes converted into rivers watered numerous mammifera; for their reign has at length arrived. The era of quadrupeds gradually increased like that of reptiles had done. At first they left their card on British soil, to employ the expression of an English geologist; a little further on their

traces are lost, but they will return to claim the land as their own.

We have seen that an animal species imprinted its form on each epoch: the pliocene age was that of elephants. At the present day, no elephants are met with in England, except at the Zoological Gardens: but formerly, these living masses wandered about in herds. Gigantic elephants, twice the size of the largest specimens now existing in Ceylon and Africa, ranged the British forests, swam in the rivers and lakes, or rubbed their tusks against the fossil trees then growing in that country. If we may judge by the quantity of their remains found, the existence of these great animals was long and their number prodigious. On the north coast of Norfolk, fishermen dredging for oysters brought ashore during thirteen years (1820-1833), two thousand molar teeth of elephants, without counting a great number of tusks and fragments of bones. It has been calculated that these remains could not have belonged to less than five thousand mammoths of British origin. If we reflect with what slowness these animals are reproduced, such ivory mines, as they have been called, lead to the supposition that thousands of ages witnessed the birth and death of these generations of colossal animals.

The same lakes and rivers were simultaneously inhabited by hippopotami, as heavy and well pro-

vided with defensive weapons as those which now dwell in the African wilds. By their side the double-horned rhinoceros cleft a path through the gloomy forests, or wallowed royally in the marshes beneath a roof of verdure. Three species of wild bulls, of which one wore a mane, bounded over the widely extending plains. Gigantic stags (when compared with living species) were the companions of the aurochs and buffaloes, and disputed with them the pasture of that ancient earth, in which they annually shed their formidable antlers. Amid the grass of the same savannahs lived the reindeer, the roebuck, a wild horse of small size, the ass, the boar, and the goat. The mammalia had taken the place of the reptiles of the preceding age, just as in the seas the whales and seals had succeeded the ichthyosauri, and in the air the birds and bats had dethroned the flying dragons. This epoch of nature had, however, its tyrants: a tiger as large as the finest Bengal specimen of the present day, watched its prey in the British jungles. Another animal of the feline race, the *machairodus*, was remarkable for its canine teeth sharpened like a saw: it was probably the most ferocious and destructive of the carnivora. Flocks of hyænas larger than those of Southern Africa gnawed the bones already gnawed by the more noble beasts of prey, the leopard and the lynx. A terrible bear, surpassing in size the ferocious

grizzly bear of the Rocky Mountains, had established its lair in the rock caves. Two beavers, one of which was of giant size, built on the surface of the water the first houses and the first towns, while, lastly, the monkey, the wild man of these wild countries, had been born.

It is interesting to visit those caverns in England where the relics of this copious fauna sleep. Near Torquay, a delightful town in Devonshire, built in a creek exposed to the sun and sheltered by a chain of hills surrounding it on all sides, save the south which opens on the sea, there is a gap hollowed out of the limestone rock, called "Kent's Hole." This cavern, like the majority of bone caves, as, for instance, Kirkdale in Yorkshire, has been under water, whence it was lifted again into the open air, after a period of time more or less long. The mouth of this cave remained closed till an accident led to its discovery. In Kent's Hole, the chief grotto is six hundred feet in length, and there are several fissures of smaller extent ramifying in the gloomy thickness of the rocks. A bed of hard stalagmite, formed at a very remote period by the water falling from the roof drop by drop, and covered with a thin layer of earth, conceals the ground of the cavern, which is composed of a sandy and reddish clay. Here a quantity of fossil bones was disinterred, belonging to the extinct species of bears, tigers, lions, and hyænas.

Such a collection of remains has given rise to various conjectures. It is generally believed that these gloomy abodes served as shambles to predaceous animals, and that these bones of horses, stags, and hares, are the remnants of their sanguinary meals. Other naturalists have asked whether, in certain cases, an instinct did not impel sick or aged animals to search such hidden places, like family vaults, in which they laid their bones with those of their ancestors. It is also possible that these bones were engulfed pell-mell in the holes of the mountains by ancient inundations. However this may be, the remains discovered in these cemeteries, amid eternal night, show that all the principal mammifera which now exist on the surface of the globe already existed towards the close of the pliocene age: only one has not yet been distinctly found, and that is man.

All these animals and many others lived in England: they are no longer found there. What are the causes that extirpated them?

Geologists at first believed that these ancient species were destroyed by a universal and sudden catastrophe, from which not one of them escaped, and such was Cuvier's opinion. The English school now demonstrates that the extinction of these great creatures was, on the contrary, slow, successive, and determined by the action of local causes. One of these causes was the gradual declension of the temperature. We have seen

that, at the commencement of the tertiary period, or during the eocene age, the climate of the British Isles, with their palms, cocoa-trees, and acacias, resembled that now found in countries favoured by the sun. This primitive flora was followed by that of the miocene age, in which the traces of a warm climate may still be seen, though less tropical than that of the preceding division. Lastly, the deposits of the pliocene formation, coming immediately after it, contain remains which announce that the temperature was attaining the present conditions of Great Britain, even if it had not already done so. Poplars, willows, chesnuts, elms, sycamores, and other common trees, already lived at the spots where they still flourish. After traversing through the course of ages Africa, Australia, and South America, the botanist, at the end of his travels through the subsoil of England, finds himself in a familiar locality.

Sir Charles Lyell drew facts more closely together, in order to arrive at a decisive proof of the decreasing temperature: he appealed to the shells, which even in the present day seem to mark the thermometrical degree of the seas in which the mollusca, the inhabitants of these shells, reside. Such a course of study enabled him to trace three zones of temperature, corresponding with the three epochs; the alteration of climate, the determining causes of the alterations of life,

were produced in time by the revolutions that took place in the structure of the British Isles, in the relative level of sea and land, and in the principal geographical features of the other countries of old Europe. By virtue of the admirable balance of natural laws, nothing changes without all being successively changed. As the climate grows colder, we thus reach what English geologists have called the icy period, or the winter of the great year.

Whoever goes attentively over the present surface of England, will notice the traces of ancient ravages at certain spots. Mountains present on one side the naked rock, on the other a cheerful green slope. These accidents impart to the scenery forms more or less abrupt, and bold and striking features. Considerable portions of the dry land were formerly covered by a bluish clay, which they still preserve. Many fragments of rocks, torn from the old land of Cumbria, from the Pennine chains, from the *moraines* of Northern England, and from the chalk mountains, may be seen here and there, broken, devastated, and torn by the action of water. These erratic blocks were evidently detached from the mother rock by a violent agency, and frequently carried pell-mell for considerable distances. They not only rolled over plains, but above the crests of the mountains that stood in their path. Some of them may be seen, indeed, one hundred and thirty miles from their original rock; and on the

East coast there are some *débris*, which are related to no British system, and which are supposed to have been transported from Norway.

How were these masses raised from their primitive site? It could only be by the action of the waters and the force of land glaciers and the ocean icebergs. We are now acquainted, in Switzerland and other countries, with the motion of the glaciers—those mountains of solid water, which at times filling an entire valley, thrust their mass forward into lower valleys. The ice moves like a river, following a determined course; though the eye cannot detect motion, it is in some respects motion in immobility: yet day by day, and year by year, the secret and silent force that animates it becomes felt. The mass advances, and, as it does so, wears out and crushes rocks; and the traces of these deep abrasions have been found even on the scarped sides of Snowdon and other lofty mountains. Rafts of ice also carried away blocks detached from the ancient rocks: the direction whence these wandering blocks come, the line of denudation, the movement of the furrows of clay or gravel running from north or north-west to the south—all announces that a mingled mass of water and ice, winding from north to south, passed that way. What were the circumstances that produced this current? Most English geologists attribute it to the upheaval of new lands in Northern Europe: it was, in fact, an

icy sea, a frozen ocean. The geographical surface of England then underwent formidable changes; the British Isles were partially submerged; the plains and a great number of elevated plateaus were buried beneath the waves of a sub-arctic sea, and entire forests were swallowed up; only the heights of Silùria, and other mountainous countries of Great Britain, kept their heads above water, thus forming an archipelago of hyperborean islands. A severe temperature extended not merely over the group of isles, but also over a great portion of the northern hemisphere. In strata of clay mingled with fragments of rocks left by this devastating ocean when it retired, shells have been found, evidencing an arctic climate. Hugh Miller spent some autumn days of 1850 in examining these strata, which are now two hundred and thirty feet above the level of the sea. He found them in a considerable number of shells, the denizens of which no longer live on the English or Scotch coast, but continue their development in high northern latitudes, as, for instance, on the coasts of Iceland and Spitzbergen. These colonies of testaceans formerly increased and multiplied in the British seas, individuals were born and died there: the abundance of their remains could only have been the slow work of ages, and such medals, therefore, testify sufficiently as to the duration of this geological winter. The deluge of water, snow, and ice which submerged

a portion of England, was not a deluge of forty days, but an epoch.

During this icy period, what had become of the great British mammifera? Some perished: others, but in small numbers, survived. The extinct animals did not disappear, however, violently and suddenly; these Titans of nature were not crushed by thunderbolts or all drowned in the waters. In connecting the passage from the ancient to the modern world by the changes that took place in the meteorological laws of the climate, English geologists have striven to contradict, by facts, Cuvier's leading idea that between these two ages "the thread of indications was broken." They have filled up by close researches that abyss of ruins and gloom which the celebrated naturalist declared impassable. For Lyell's school, now the prevailing one in Great Britain, there is no longer an antediluvian or postdiluvian world; there is only a continuous action of natural causes gradually renewing by destroying. The changes of life before, during, and after the icy period, were gradual and not sudden, so that no line of demarcation can be clearly drawn between the existence of the creatures that then peopled, one after the other, land and sea. What was at first regarded as an abyss is no longer even a limit: the great elephants of the end of the pliocene wandered for ages under trees now common in England—the Scotch fir, the birch, and the Norwegian pine.

After our present notions as to the manners and local distribution of these great animals, it is difficult to understand such an association of facts: but naturalists have recognised that the British elephant, the great hippopotamus, the rhinoceros, and other extinct giants, belonged to the now living families, which reside in countries where the temperature is nearly the same throughout the year. Now, the climate of England was not such, even before the epoch of the great cold. At a later date these animals disappeared slowly, as the conditions necessary to their existence were withdrawn. Everything, however, indicates that they resisted during a certain period the increasing invasion of a severe temperature. The mammoths, clothed with long and warm fur, the tiger, even the monkey, held out for some time; but, as the cold gradually increased, with the ocean of ice that mounted like a wall round this inundated country, the force of things decreed the extermination of the creatures deprived thus of their proper climate.

Again, the animals of the old world did not all perish. The local species that died out were those whose constitution could not adapt itself to the changes of climate: the others, more flexible, succeeded in clinging to life by means of a few concessions of form. Several of the latter, whose existence preceded that of man by some thousand years, were at a later date destroyed by man.

A great bear, which ravaged and disturbed the Scottish Highlands, was destroyed within historic times: we know the date when the last boar and the last wolf were killed in England, Scotland, and Ireland. Thus two causes concurred for the extirpation of the wild denizens of British ground: one, contemporary, the lowering of the temperature; the other, posterior, the arrival of man. It is interesting to notice that the animals now erased from the pages of local English zoology were all dangerous and useless, while the useful species, such as the ox, horse, donkey, and goat, were preserved by passing into the domain of domesticity.

When we sail a certain distance from the present coasts of Britain, we cannot help noticing a flat terrace of unequal width, which leans against an escarpment more or less terrific. On this terrace, many of the towns which now serve as seaports to the United Kingdom were built. No English geologist doubts but that a noble platform, at the foot of which stretches a skirt of vegetable earth, sand, or gravel, and studded with sea shells, was at some period the line of sea-coast against which the ocean waves broke at high tide. At this period, the sea rose twenty or thirty feet higher than it does now, or else the land was by so much lower. At certain places this terrace juts out in bold promontories, at others it falls back into a picturesque bay, where you may see

caverns hollowed, often to a considerable depth, by the waves. Relatively to the history of the human race, this line of coast must be very old, though geologically recent, for its origin dates back beyond all written tradition. The wall of Antoninus, built by the Romans to protect them against the Caledonians, was built by the architects of that day, not with reference to the old line, but the new coast belt which now exists. We can conclude from this, then, that in the year 140 (when, according to antiquarians, the greater portion of this wall was built), the zone of the old shores had attained its present elevation above the bed of the sea.

And yet, behind and above this rampart, another barrier is found of a date far more remote, a second terrace, against which the sea dashed ere the other existed. We have there before us the slow and successive retreat of the waters. However long the sea assailed the first line of coasts, it must have done so for a far more considerable period against the second, if we may judge by the present state of the ancient rampart, and the greater depth of the caverns. But this is not all: strata of marine shells are piled above this last terrace, and among them are some which no longer live on the English coast: these deposits are either contemporaneous with or posterior to the glacial epoch. From this new range of facts we discover, then, a trace of what has passed since

the overthrow of the elements. Everything indicates here an epoch, or, more correctly, a succession of epochs, during which Great Britain, partly buried under a deluge of ice, reappeared, and gradually recovered a milder temperature, though not equal to that of the old ages.

As the submerged land rises, we find hardly any of the forms analogous to those of tropical countries. We have first the Irish elk, celebrated for the width of its flattened horns; we have the horse: the origins of our domestic animals rest most frequently in the now dried up bed of old fresh-water lakes. At the moment when man is born, and he is perhaps already born in some plateau of Central Asia, living nature destroys in the British Isles the gigantic and terrible forms of the old world. New species of plants and animals arrive successively to fill up the gaps caused by the destruction of the old flora, and replace the ancient fauna with features henceforth exotic. It is natural to ask where this creation of animal and vegetable species ended? and British science replies: Nowhere. Among the assemblage of things living, dying, growing, or reproducing themselves on the present surface of Great Britain, some preceded the glacial period, some were born during the long partial inundation, while, lastly, some commenced with the growing elevation of the land, which emerged rejuvenated from the bed of the waters.

These great changes are not the last which the

geographical form of England, Scotland, and Ireland underwent. Since ages more or less historic, lakes have filled up or diminished in extent by the mere fact of the sediment the water deposits, and the remains of shells which raise their bed. All the large rivers of Great Britain have formed along their banks, but chiefly at their mouth, new lands, where the best pasturage grows, where the horned cattle browse, and which produce, for several years in succession, splendid crops without growing impoverished.

Another sort of deposit is going on along the British coasts: it consists of sand and pebbles thrown up by the sea, which impede navigation, form chains of dunes, and bury churches and houses. At certain places this sand is composed of a moist dust of shells and madrepores, which consolidates into stone, so compact that it is used for building purposes. To the south, near Helston, the terrible waves that roll into Mount's Bay have raised a lofty mountain of sand which blocks up Loo Harbour, as it is traditionally called, although the old port has disappeared, and its place is occupied by a fresh-water lake, situated inland. From time to time this lake swells and rises so high, that it is found necessary to drain it by cutting through the sand-bank. The waves ever undermine and wear away day by day on some coasts the hardest rocks, those classical symbols of resistance: presently, these motionless masses fall,

proving to the eye, by their vast fragments, that there is nothing eternal in this world but change.

According to Lyell, Great Britain may expect to undergo at a future date material changes differing from those we have described. He does not believe with Cuvier that the progress of nature is arrested: the same laws which successively modified climate and the face of countries where civilisation now flourishes, are still at work on the surface of the globe, and must produce the same consequences at a given time. All that occurred before or during the historic ages is now going on around us: stones have not ceased to be produced or to grow hard; the seas advance at certain points, and draw back at others; dull volcanic agencies raise the level of land, which sinks at other points; the faculty of making fossils is not even lost, as has been supposed: that which lives tends to leave a trace, as much as that which has ceased to live. As, however, nature requires billions on billions of ages to accomplish her great works, most of these slowly coming changes defy our limited means of observation. To judge of the movement, besides, you would be obliged to take up your post in immobility; but that does not exist, and man changes with all else that changes. Creation continues: the fern seed that dries and falls at the end of the year into the marshes, the grain of sand borne by the wind or the wave, the drop of water falling from the rock,

the obscure labours of the zoophyte which lives and dies at the bottom of the seas, the generations of molluscs, whose house or tomb increases the sedimentary masses of the oceans, rivers, or lakes,—all renews, all modifies, the ever living face of the universe.

We have seen the group of British Isles rise, as it were, piecemeal, from the bosom of the seas, which in turn covered, deposited, and upheaved them. Let man now arrive, for the scene of his future power is prepared. He will carve out houses, palaces, and edifices in the sepulchre of extinct worlds; he will pave the streets of towns with the bed of old seas; he will cover his habitations with the hardened mud of the first waters that cooled the granitic bark of the globe. The subterraneous distribution of metals will become the germ of local trades, for it is in the nature of manufacturing firms to congregate at these territorial points, where the primary matter abounds, or offers itself with superior qualities. The excellent geological products make excellent workmen: hence the incomparable factories of Sheffield and Manchester, where iron assumes every shape, and engenders, if I may use the expression, the organs and muscles of social wealth. The ancient forests, converted into inexhaustible masses of mineral coal, will serve to feed the flock of machines. With them, man will make movement, will make life: he will collect the animals that escaped from the ruins of worlds, long ago swal-

lowed up; by cross-breeding and cultivation, he will create new species with the old species; he will enrich the native flora with exotic trees and plants; and he will fertilise arable land by spreading over it the white dust of life, the vegetable and animal manure of departed seas.

The insular form itself will have much to do with the civilisation of Great Britain. These inviolable islands send their moving girdle of ships to float around them, and attach them to their coasts in moments of danger. England has no need of fortresses, for her citadel is the sea. Geological phenomena have drawn the natural limits of states, and these limits have exercised an influence over the development of the national character. It must be observed that those human races spread over indefinite space have never attained a high grade in the social state, while those, on the other hand, which a sea belt has forced to draw together and establish themselves in a restricted territory, have founded cities at an early date, have compelled the earth to support them, and have torn from nature those resources which the narrow geographical limits seemed to deny them.

We are now prepared to study the resources of England. In the old mythology, Saturn was the father of the gods: regarded with reference to political economy and the present physiology of history, the territory is the parent of human faculties.

CHAPTER V.

COLLECTION OF CELTIC AND SAXON CURIOSITIES — COLLECTION OF HUMAN SKULLS—THE BENEFIT HISTORY CAN DERIVE FROM THESE MEMORIALS—CELTIC TOMBS—THE LOCUS CONSECRATUS—OTHER MONUMENTS OF THE ANCIENT BRITONS—WALES—SCOTLAND—IRELAND—THE ISLE OF MAN—THE WAPPING RATS—HIGHLAND SOLDIERS.

THERE is probably no greater spectacle in the life of the human race than the successive appearance and fusion on British territory of the various races that formed the English nation; above all, there is none which more fully displays the divine and providential side of history. Numerous sources are offered the person who desires to study these first and curious pages of the annals of England. Among them, I must mention, first, the museums, the private collections, in which are found weapons, works of art, and domestic utensils of the several tribes which, at marked epochs, invaded England, Scotland, and Ireland.

One of the richest collections of national antiquities is that of the British Museum: and it ex-

tends from the earliest days of the occupation of Britain by the Celts to the Norman Conquest. This is not the only one, for you find in the principal cities historical collections formed by private persons, or by learned societies. This species of research is certainly not to be despised, for the natural character of the races is reflected in these works; but, regarding it as a study of manners, I prefer another field of observation. It is interesting, I grant, to find again the cradle of architecture, to follow beneath a few feet of trodden earth ruins forgotten by time, the relics of commencing industry, and the traces of the old peoples that passed over the soil of Britain. Still, I ask myself if it would not be possible to reconstruct, at the same time, a human archæology, whose oracles would be as sure and even more instructive for the philosophy of history than the dumb revelations of stone and bronze. The antiquarians have too greatly neglected the medals of life. I call thus the skulls of the different races by which England was inhabited at various periods. In spite of many estimable works, British ethnology is still in its infancy; but this does not arise from the want of elements, as I shall show.

The celebrated Pritchard, to whose labours the science of races owes so many new ideas and delicate observations, foresaw that an osteological history might some day emerge from the old tombs in which the successive colonisers of Britain have

slept for ages. He recommended repeatedly the preservation of these remains, and, above all, the human skull, a species of crown placed by the hand of nature on all animal creation. During the later period of his life, he was ever busied in collecting the materials for a work on this new order of national antiquities. The idea of such a work was carried out by Drs. Barnard Davis and John Thurnam, who are now publishing a history of the old inhabitants of Britain, derived from the memorials, and especially the skulls found in old sepulchres, under the title of *Crania Britannica*. The historic age of these skulls is attested by that of the tombs, on which antiquarians are now agreed, and by various objects that accompany the human relics. This subterraneous physiology of half-exhumed races interests the moralist in the highest degree, for he thus sees formed strata on strata the structure of the different families which in the course of ages have brought fresh and successive organs to British civilisation.

The soil of the isles which together form the United Kingdom has been covered by several deluges of peoples who settled one upon the other; Celts, Romans, Saxons, Danes, or Vikings, and Normans. It is not only in the ancient tombs that the rudiments of the English nation may be found: several of the primitive races still exist, and occupy, on the surface of the country, spaces

limited by mountains or by the sea. There we can study the genesis of the British people from the life: the origin, alliances, manners, and intellectual condition of these groups distributed according to the order of time and place, form a vast collection of facts, in which we shall discover the root of the national character. The Englishman, with his peculiar traits, his own genius, and his powerful personality, stands out gradually from the gulf of ages and the chaos of events, which have on several occasions agitated and renewed the population of Great Britain.

Memorials of more than one description will enable us to determine the nature of the three great series of formation through which we see the British type spring into life, and grow and become definitively constituted.

The soil of Great Britain is excessively rich in Celtic remains: numerous tombs have been opened, and through the nature of the objects found in them antiquarians have been able to establish three distinct epochs in the life of this race: the ages of stone, of bronze, and of iron.

At the British Museum is a room devoted to Celtic antiquities, containing very curious specimens found in England and Ireland. The chronological order of facts has been expressed by the arrangement of specimens, as far as possible. In the first glass case are the remains known by the name of Celtic stones; they seem to have been

fastened to wooden handles by leathern thongs: they were the earliest hatchets. On the following shelves you perceive other historical fossils, the rudiments of weapons, such as knife-blades and arrow-heads of flint. Further on are the first traces of beginning industry: hammers and stone hatchets pierced, so as to be fastened on wood. These axes, of the second formation, were doubtless employed to fell the oldest trees in the British forests, while the former were intended, in all probability, to repulse the attacks of noxious animals.

Such a sucession of forms well expresses the natural development of human powers: war and the chase must have preceded labour, properly so called, and the useful arts. These vestiges of the stone ages, wedges, scissors, knives, known under the name of celts (from the Latin *celtis*), are found in all the superficial soil of Great Britain, but antiquarians and amateurs are obliged to be cautious, for certain English workmen have counterfeited these articles with a skill which renders it extremely difficult to detect them. This illicit trade certainly demands a skilled hand; but how much more should we admire the patience of the clumsy predecessors of the Saxon race, who had not at their service steel implements, and were compelled to work flint with flint, stone with stone!

In those tombs, which are of great antiquity,

human skulls are found extremely low, flat, and of a pyramidal form. They offer, as regards structure and volume, a notable difference from those of the following period, the age of bronze. This difference has given rise to reflections: it has been asked whether the first men, who had nothing to provide food with but arrow-heads of pebbles, and whose skull expresses the features of a social condition limited to the satisfaction of the primary wants of physical life, were really Celts. Were they not rather aborigines, the product of an earlier immigration, whom the invading Celts found and annihilated? The real contrast existing between the skulls of the first age and those of the following ages may, however, depend not so much on the introduction of a new variety of the human species, as on progressive comfort among the native population and improved means of obtaining it. We must add, as an impartial historian of facts, that tradition is not favourable to the hypothesis of a primitive family of mankind settled in Great Britain prior to the arrival of the Celts. In an old Welsh chronicle, it is stated that the Kymri, when they descended on the British Isles, had no tribute to pay, because they were the first occupants of the soil. Before them there were no living men on these isles, there were only bears, wolves, beavers, and big horned cattle.

This written testimony is interesting, but a

weak authority in the sight of the ethnologist. All the ancient races have displayed a species of self-esteem in representing themselves as the first children of the soil on which they are settled. If we only consult traditions, it is certain that nothing can be discovered, in this night of ages, beyond the occupation of Britain by the Celts; but a science has been latterly developed which throws some new light on the succession of the human races of each country, and that science is the linguistic. Now, some philosophers have fancied they have discovered in the English language certain sounds whose origin they can refer neither to the Celtic nor Tudesque idioms.

Doctor Prichard gives the names of Ugro-Tatars to a group of nations whose principal types are the Mongolian, the Tungrian, the Tatar, and the Turkish, but which ramify into a great number of tribes, mostly nomadic. It is the largest and most widely-spread family on the globe; the facial angle is less open in it than in the Caucasian race; the face is flat, the beard thin, the skin yellow, the cheek-bones are prominent, the eyes narrow and oblique, the lips large, the hair straight and black. From these tribes, nearly all of which have remained in a state of barbarism, spring Attila, Genghis, and Tamerlane. All indicates that the Ugro-Tatars, with whom are connected certain hyperborean races, the Samoyedes, the Lapons, and the Esqui-

maux, constitute one of the oldest branches of the human race. There are also reasons for believing that certain tribes of this family were aborigines of various parts of Europe. The Basques, if we may judge by their language, belong to this prehistoric migration: standing upright among nations, which at a later date invaded their territory, they look down on the progress of ages and events, like those rocks of a more ancient formation which rise on the surface of strata deposited by other deluges. English philologists, then, fancy they can trace in the British idioms a few remains of this mother tongue, whose characters are known, and have concluded from this that the population of the United Kingdom underwent, at a remote period, an infusion of Lapon blood. This hypothesis, I confess, rests on a fragile basis, but it would have been unjust not to allude to it, and finds some support, as we have seen, in various memorials, such as stone weapons and skulls, which are found bearing the same traits in different parts of Europe and the whole world, where they seem to have preceded the first settlement of the white or Circassian race. We are fortunately about to emerge from this gloomy period which enfolds the cradle of all nations, ancient and modern: what civilised nations know the least is their commencement.

There was then a time when the first inhabitants of the British Isles, resembling in this

respect the savages of the Southern Seas, were ignorant of the art of manipulating metals. The transition between the ages of stone and bronze is marked in some tombs by a medley of implements belonging to both periods. It is certainly difficult to establish a clear connexion in an order of facts so ancient, but the features of a less vague epoch soon emerge. The first metal of which the trace is found is a combination of copper and tin.

The age of bronze forms a peculiar feature of British antiquities. In Norway, for instance, this period does not exist; you pass at once from bone or stone articles to iron implements. Elsewhere, the bronze age is represented by one of copper. This important modification must be attributed, in Great Britain, to the presence of tin, which the soil contains in such abundance. We can see at the British Museum rich specimens of the second epoch, and the names of the localities where these relics of history were discovered. Not only are the articles of more finished workmanship than those of the preceding age, but they are also more varied; on the bronze, as on the stone, the gradual development of industry can be traced. The first lance-heads and metal tools resemble in shape those carved out of flint, and it is interesting to watch how long man sought processes which appear to us in the present day perfectly natural. One of the great discoveries was—can it be believed?—putting a handle to a

weapon, and this was not made all at once. It is admirable to follow on the pieces of bronze the experiments of the human hand, from the single-headed javelin-heads, with a spike fixed in a hilt of split wood, to those which have cheeks, and lastly those which have a socket intended to receive the handle.

The antiquities of this period may be divided into four orders—arms of war, industrial tools, domestic utensils and personal ornaments. You have before you, in the British Museum collection, the first stone hammers employed in the old copper mines to break the mineral. Here, too, are the first moulds employed to run the metal and give it a shape. These objects were found, there is reason for believing, at the very places where they were used, and by their side lumps of native copper have frequently been seen. I know no sight more imposing or instructive than that of these embryos of industry. The consequence of introducing the use of metals must have been incalculable: through them the ancient Britons increased their strength, they extended their action over nature, metamorphosed the soil, and introduced a dawn of comfort into domestic life. Man has hardly secured what was absolutely necessary by his toil, ere an artistic feeling is enkindled, and I regard with delight the first objects of luxury, clumsy though they be, in the shape of bracelets, collars, and head ornaments.

Among these antiquities, however, we must not let out of sight the most interesting of historic monuments—man himself.

What was the exact shape of the British skull at this period? I will select, to answer this query, a specimen which seems to me characteristic. The road from London to Bath, after leaving Marlborough, runs over a large expanse of chalky downs. Near Marlborough there was a Roman town, or military outpost. In the undulating plain extending from the foot of the downs, and through which runs the little river Kennet, was the *locus consecratus* of the ancient Britons. Two centuries back, a double circle of stones might be seen here, most of which still existed in 1723; this spot was then popularly called the sanctuary. An antiquary of the day, Aubrey, gives it the name of "solemn walks." It was the outline of a stone avenue that formerly led to the great temple of Abury. The *locus consecratus* was surrounded by a British necropolis, and it was doubtless a religious custom to collect the dead round the temple. During the last century bushels of bones were picked up here. Such a situation, so near the surrounding wall of a temple, at first led to the belief that this Celtic Golgotha belonged to the most distinguished Britons of the circumjacent tribes, but antiquaries now allow that it was a cemetery common to those Britons of the lower orders who had not the means to procure a tumu-

lus. It is even to be feared that they might be the remains of victims immolated to the superstitions of the age, for near these human relics sharp pebbles were found, possibly the instruments of torture.

The downs which twine round the Kennet and the meadows also abound with private tombs. Three of these barrows, of an elegant bell shape, are formed by a common trench. In August, 1854, these monuments were explored by Dr. Thurnam, who found a deposit of burned bones in a low crypt. These dainty bones probably belonged to a female, and the three barrows doubtless formed a family vault, probably that of two brothers, with the wife of one, perhaps of both, in the centre.* Another mound near the sacred circle seemed to have been the post of honour reserved for the chief of the clan dwelling on these downs, for it is the only one in which burning the bones had not been carried into effect. The body was apparently deposited in the hollow trunk of a tree, probably an elm, and the remains of this trunk with the bark were found under the skeleton, the bones of which they had dyed brown. These bones are of uncommon size, and it is estimated that the stature of the living person must have been at least six feet six inches. Near the head were a small axe or chisel, a pike with

* Uxores habent inter se communes, et maximè fratres cum fratribus.—*Julius Cæsar.*

the handle, and a lance-head, all of bronze. The skull of this Celtic warrior, with his arms, may be seen in Dr. Thurnam's collection at Devizes; and the ossification of the head indicates that this man could not have been less than seventy years of age. The considerable dimensions of the skull, in proportion to the rest of the stature of this human mastodon, may very possibly depend on individual circumstances; besides, for the researches of Abbé Frère as to the antiquities of skulls have shown that the development of races was not in a ratio to the volume, but to the shape, of the skull. In fact, the typical form of this head, the size of the back part of the skull, the narrow and retiring forehead, the prominent eyebrow arches, the wide and quadrangular eye sockets, the thickness of the heavy jaws, still holding all the teeth except the wisdom teeth—all give this skeleton face a strongly pronounced character of wild and animal life. This character is found in various degrees on most of the skulls I was able to examine belonging to the bronze age. All the antiquities agree, then, in representing to us in the ancient Britons the rude infancy of an heroic and powerful race. On this basis the edifice of English civilisation was one day to be erected.

The age of bronze is succeeded in Great Britain by that of iron. This discovery was, at any rate, slow in being made, for the use of bronze

for manufacturing weapons lived longer in England than among the Gauls, and the insular position of the inhabitants may account for this. In none of the tombs yet opened in Southern England have any iron weapons been found, while bronze arms of elegant shape are repeatedly met with. Some antiquarians believe that the use of iron in the southern states of Great Britain dates from the Belgic immigration, and, according to historic calculations, this event happened hardly a century prior to Cæsar's invasion. However this may be, the epoch extending to the conquest of the island, under the Emperor Claudius, may be considered as the transition from the bronze to the iron age. At the outset, iron seems to have had the honour of being regarded as a precious metal, for the Caledonian tribes wore iron rings on their necks and loins. Among the relics of that epoch found in the Thames and elsewhere I will merely quote the iron swords, with bronze hilts and scabbards: they are of superior, though evidently barbarous, workmanship. The human skulls, supposed to belong to this period, differ in shape and size from those belonging to the two former ages. All indicates in the organisation of the race, as well as in industry, the traits of a civilisation which is becoming elevated and complicated. The Celtic race was evidently progressing when the Roman invasion fell upon it

and stopped the natural development of the type, by imposing on it other laws, another creed, and another social order.

These metallurgical memorials are not the only ones the Celts have left like evidences of their existence in the soil of Great Britain. By careful research, traces, rather obscure, I allow, have been found of houses and ancient cultivation. The Celts knew the art of tillage, and their habitations themselves indicate a scale of progression: the first abodes were, in all probability, caves situated on the shore, and hollowed out by the sea, as, for instance, Kent's Hole near Torquay. It is supposed that these holes were inhabited, at a very early period, by fishing families. Elsewhere, antiquarians have fancied they could mark the site of a few Celtic villages. They have followed, with practised eye, the lines of streets and houses, or at least the hollow ways leading to houses. But there are other and more undeniable monuments which proclaim in Great Britain the grandeur of the Celtic race: they are the *cromlechs*, vulgarly known by the name of Druidic stones. I noticed these funereal monuments in several parts of Great Britain, and was everywhere struck by the Cyclopean character that distinguishes them.

There are two varieties of cromlechs: the one made of raw and shapeless stone: the other of stone touched up by the chisel. I frequently stopped,

for instance, between Rochester and Maidstone, before an old monument well known under the name of Kit's City House, which stands on the naked brow of a hill. It is composed of four rough enormous stones, covered with the gloomy hue of age. This rude infancy of architecture has something about it strange and mysterious which plunges the mind into a species of stupor. By the side of the cromlech a flock of sheep was browsing in the stunted grass; a few of them even sought shelter from the sun under the vast stone laid across as a roof, which three other stones supported. The shepherd, leaning against a mound opposite the monument, was whistling a rustic air.

The primitive shape of the cromlechs must not be judged by the state in which these old tombs now present themselves to the traveller, for English antiquarians allow that these piles of stones were originally covered with earthwork. These mounds rose to a height more or less considerable, according to the nature of the locality, and also the importance of the defunct. They enclosed a clumsy room made of natural stone, frequently of colossal size: this was the chamber of death, the sepulchre. Most frequently, it is true, the British tumuli are found empty: but they were opened by greedy hands, hoping to find treasures in them. Crypts with their primitive covering have been found in the Channel Isles, and it was chiefly

from such sepulchral chambers that those artistic objects have been obtained to which we owe our scanty knowledge of the character and manners of the people that created these monuments: a posthumous history has come out of these tombs, in which a mysterious race had buried the secret of its humble social position. The researches of Mr. Lukis in the Celtic sepulchres of the Channel Islands have proved that these chambers of stone were made from generation to generation: this furnishes a grand idea of this people, which was anxious to survive even death by indestructible works. The ancient Celts seem to have neglected those houses in which man dwells but a short space, and reserved all the resources of a shapeless, but grand, architecture to render illustrious those other dwellings which man rents from eternity.

Since the philosophy of history has given up, under compulsion, the fiction of autochthonic peoples, it has striven to find the cradle of the various races which have gradually deposited the soil of modern civilisation. Whence came the Celts?

Europe was peopled in prehistoric times by various successive migrations, true deluges in which wave thrust forward wave. These human deluges, nevertheless, started from one point, the East: the two most ancient migrations are those of the Celts and Germans, two branches of the great race of Japhet. The Celts came first in the

order of time, and cutting a path, in all probability, across the deserts that then bordered the shores of the Mediterranean, spread over Western Europe. The Oriental origin of the Celts is attested by their language, in which traces of Sanscrit are found. Some of these more or less wandering tribes, doubtless pushed on by other tribes which disputed the ground with them, passed over into Great Britain. It is Prichard's opinion that the Irish Celts formed a separate family, distinct from the British and Gaulish Celts, before either of the latter had quitted Asia. There are reasons for believing that they reached Western Europe before the Welsh, and that they found the road to Ireland by traversing Spain and crossing the Bay of Biscay; and this expedition supplied the old Irish romances and bards with more than one episode. From Ireland this group of Celts passed, in the third century of our era, into Western Scotland and the Isle of Man.

We have seen the dead race; let us now compare the living race, and what country is better adapted than Britain for this new survey of facts? The relics of the old British monuments disappear daily and everywhere under the ploughshare, but the Celtic family persists in remaining. We shall find it again on three great stages, where it continues the series of its developments: Ireland, Scotland, and the Isle of Man. In Ireland, specially on the west coast, the most intact

branch of the Gaelic Celts will be found. Connaught, for instance, on the Atlantic, has been protected for centuries from any infusion of foreign blood, save that which may come from the north and east, and that has been insignificant. There, then, we shall discover the Celt of green Ireland in his typical form. Like Ireland, Scotland is Gaelic, at least if we regard the native population; but the stock is less pure than in Ireland. If the admixture of English blood in the Highlands and Western Isles has been weak, the accession of Scandinavian blood has been considerable. It is the same with the Isle of Man, where the third variety of the modern Celtic population is found.

In Wales, the idiom differs from the dialect spoken in those three countries: the language of a Welsh Briton is altogether unintelligible to a Gael, and a Gael cannot understand a Briton, while an Irish and Scotch Celt understand each other. The Celts, in the same way, can catch the meaning of a Manxman, though with some difficulty. Hence we can regard the Welsh as a distinct branch from the Celtic root, and they are therefore called Cambro-Britons.

If we now compare the living Celtic race with the memorials of the same nation found in the tombs, we perceive an evident analogy of physical constitution. The Celtic skull is doubtless developed, but only in its type, and that type is fine.

Such a persistency of form will not surprise physiologists, for they are aware with what tenacity the human races, and specially the more ancient, preserve their character, so long as interbreeding does not interfere entirely to modify them. You can now recognise the head of a Gael or a Briton among a thousand, so greatly do the structure of the skull and the lines of the face differ from those of the Saxon population. The manners and faculties of the two races offer equally marked contrasts: the Celtic family, generally intelligent, evinces, in Great Britain, no great liking for the practical conquests of industry: it has more willingly adhered to fishing, a pastural and agricultural life, and in some cases mining: hence its place is more frequently occupied by colonies of English workmen. The Celt does not like trades, but loves the soil.

Let us discuss this more precisely, by choosing one of the localities where the Celtic group is best preserved. There are in Scotland mountains and isles where the population has very marked traits: they are generally those where nature impresses on the landscape a wilder and stranger physiognomy: I specially allude to the Hebrides and the Grampian chain. If you select as your starting-point Braemar Castle, and extend your excursions for a radius of thirty miles, you will discover on all sides the *beau idéal* of a Scotch landscape: steaming waterfalls among rocks, winding rivers

enclosed by precipices, gloomy ravines covered with firs and beech-trees, a few relics of old Caledonian forests, granitic blocks whose mass darkens the air, and spreads a species of twilight over the base of the mountains even at mid-day. Here lives a primitive tribe which has lost scarce any of its characteristics: they are principally shepherds, and the most ancient races of sheep are grouped around them. The men are tall and athletic, slightly inclined to stoutness: their physical strength corresponds with their powerful and muscular limbs. Whether we attribute the change to the work of ages, a higher degree of moral culture, or any other cause, the fact remains the same, that these modern Celts have proportionately more ample and better shaped skulls than those of their ancestors. Still you can distinguish the traits of the race: they have a rather long head, narrow forehead, a low, straight, and thick eyebrow, curly hair, eyes of a light colour, a wide mouth, and pointed chin: the general contour of the face is angular, and the expression bold. Their manners are simple, hospitable, and soft, in spite of their rough appearance.

With these rude Caledonians we will do well to compare another branch of the same race, more remarkable still for the development of athletic forms: I allude to the Connemara peasants. In that picturesque country we shall find the Celtic woman with features that preserve the imprint of

original vigour. They have generally black hair and brown eyes. They are distinguished by their tall stature, their robust limbs, and their open countenances, which are not without an air of half-wild grace. Young girls of uncultivated beauty, with their hair hanging over their shoulders, in a perfect state of nature, display, as they walk, naked feet and well-turned ankles. Cruel famines and the potato disease have decimated this population, but it is curious to see with what energy the type resists the causes of physical degradation. The inhabitants of Joyce's land still form a race of giants: the misfortunes of the time may possibly have altered the present generation, but it has not effaced the Patagonian character of these ancient Celts. It is the same with the natural power of the blood as with the cascade seen on the road between Manea and Oughterard: dry summers and severe winters may suspend the majestic fall of the waters between the jagged rocks, but when better days arrive, the stream reassumes an air of abrupt and grand beauty amid the precipices.

The old Celtic race has left in Great Britain another representative we might hardly expect: it is the rat. I was walking one night with a Scotch naturalist in Wapping, that poorest, most ill-famed, ugliest, oldest, and yet most picturesque part of London. Here you see docks, suffrance wharfs, sail, anchor, and rope factories; sailors of

every country and colour lodge in equivocal houses in narrow streets; a muddy pavement, crushed by the wheels, sees every day the riches of a universe passing by on heavy carts. We went down Wapping Old Stairs, celebrated in sailors' songs; the moon shed a sickly light over the Thames, and, except the voice of the river, all was silent. On the muddy worn steps we witnessed a fight between two rats of different size and colour, and the weaker of the adversaries was killed by the stronger ere we had time to interfere. My friend gave vent to a sigh. "Poor Briton!" he exclaimed, "such is your fate. Everywhere you succumb to the assaults of invaders. But a short time longer and the naturalist will seek you in vain on the surface of your native isles!" He then explained to me that there were two sorts of rats in England—the black and the brown: the brown rat, so the tradition runs, came from Germany in the vessel that brought a new dynasty—the House of Hanover. This intruder, the Hanoverian rat, has gradually destroyed the native, or old Celtic rat, which can only be met with in some remote parts of England, and at Wapping.

A race of men, which, after occupying the territory for ages, still covers one-third of Great Britain, in a more or less mingled shape, deserved particular attention. The Celtic group is, besides, no stranger to the glory of the English arms. Brave, chivalrous, and enthusiastic, the High-

landers supply excellent soldiers, who are distinguished by their theatrical costume. These beyond-sea Gauls recently taught the British Indies, probably the cradle of their race, that their blood has neither been chilled nor degenerated by ice. It was the sound of their martial bagpipes which bore the blessed news of deliverance beneath the walls of Lucknow, and at the sight of these brave men in their red and green petticoats, marching with perfect discipline and an air of heroic resolution, the Indians fancied they beheld the phantoms of the women they had murdered rising to take vengeance.

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CHAPTER VI.

THE ROMANS IN GREAT BRITAIN—ARRIVAL OF THE SAXONS—THEIR CHARACTER—THEIR TOMBS—THEIR INFLUENCE ON THE FORMATION OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE—BRYAN FAUSSETT—THE SAXON TYPE AT GUILDFORD—THE ENGLISH WOMEN—GENERAL VIEW OF LONDON—PRINCIPAL FEATURE OF ANGLO-SAXON INDUSTRY—THE GREAT EASTERN.

THE Celtic layer was covered in Great Britain by the Roman invasion, but as the Romans left here monuments which may be found elsewhere, and skulls whose shape is well known, I will not delay with them. There is only one important question to decide: Did the new races become crossed to such an extent as to produce a new variety in Britain? History and the present situation of the Celts on the surface of the country, seem to deny rather than confirm the hypothesis of an alliance to any great extent between the conquered and conquering nations. Everything indicates that the ancient Britons were driven from southern and central England towards the north, where they sought refuge in inaccessible

mountains. The fate of the Celtic race in Great Britain resembles, in this respect, that of the aboriginal tribes of America; generally, it was not commingled, but succumbed or retired.

It is the universal law that very unequal races —I mean those belonging to very different ages of civilisation—though brought together on the same territory, evince but slight inclination to unite. Still, it would be rash to affirm that, when the conquest was consolidated in the reign of Claudius, the Romans did not contract alliances with the Britons, and if this fusion of the two bloods took place, in all probability a new type, designated the Celto-Roman, resulted from it. It must be observed that up to this time the population of Great Britain only differed from the Gauls in certain shades: at the bottom it was composed of the same elements. We are authorised to believe that the family traits still existing between the two peoples, the English and the French, emanate from this common origin. We will now see whence the difference arrived.

The Celts and Romans were swept away by a new deluge of men—the Saxon race.

Who were the Saxons? whence did they come? what were their manners? The Saxons formed part of that great Germanic emigration which entered Europe by the coasts of the Black Sea. On arriving in presence of the Celts, who were established before them on the European con-

tinent, these new comers gradually drove them towards the west and south-west. The branches of the great Germanic confederation extended from the Elbe to the Rhine, and traditions agree in representing the Saxons as brigands of the seas. Their situation on the maritime coasts of Europe, not far from the most fertile provinces of the Roman empire, was a circumstance favourable to the development of piracy. These marauders launched their vessels on the waves, and left it to the wind to waft them to some inhabited coast. The feeling of fear was unknown to them: at the risk of shipwreck they chose a tempestuous day to land, because their victims would be less on their guard. These lions of the sea resembled the lord of the African deserts, who prowls about the forests on stormy nights, and who, at the moment all nature trembles, seizes his prey, already prostrate with terror.

Who cannot imagine the navigating genius of Great Britain floating in the germ aboard these rude and clumsy Saxon barks? The natural penchant of races may be regulated, elevated, and purified with the progress of civilisation, but is never destroyed. The Anglo-Saxons, in the fifth and sixth centuries, started from the Cimbric peninsula for the coasts of Great Britain: the old inhabitants, that is, the Celts and the Roman colonists, disappeared as the conquerors advanced, or accepted the yoke. Hence the soil of Great

Britain will offer us a fresh series of historic facts, antiquities, and human memorials.

The first English antiquarian to whom an extended knowledge of the pagan Anglo-Saxon period is owing, is the Rev. Bryan Faussett, who obtained his information from tombs. He resided in Kent, a district peculiarly rich in chalk downs, on which are found remarkable groups of Saxon barrows or cemeteries dug out on the sides or tops of the hills. In 1730, one of these groups of sepultures was partially opened on a down near Chatham: Bryan Faussett was at that time only ten years of age, and was present at the opening: this sufficed to give him a decided taste for such researches. In 1750, Faussett resided four miles from Canterbury, in a village where he held the cure: and, after overcoming numerous obstacles, he was enabled to begin his researches in 1757, in a cemetery known by the name of Tremworth Doun, which, however—sad disappointment to the antiquary—turned out to be a Roman cemetery. Faussett, like a good Englishman, was only desirous to discover the rudiments of his own race. From 1760 to 1763 he pursued his researches in a rich Saxon cemetery at Gilton, in the parish of Ash, near Sandwich, when he opened no less than one hundred and six tombs. It was at that time a received opinion that these mounds or tumuli indicated the scene of a battle between Cæsar and the Britons, and he proved the false-

hood of this. The collection formed by Bryan Faussett was recently offered to the British Museum, which declined to purchase, and it was on the point of being dispersed, when it fell into the hands of Mr. Joseph Mayer, who saved it for the honour of science and Great Britain.

Bryan Faussett had a successor in the Rev. James Douglas, who, in 1780, continued his work: at the present day such investigations are carried out on a large scale. Among the recent discoveries we may refer to the small cemetery opened by Mr. Wylie in Gloucestershire, and the more extensive tumuli ransacked by Mr. Neville at Wilbraham. I was myself present at one of these openings, and the scene, I must confess, had an unpleasant effect on me, for I thought that, some day, the European states we now inhabit will be covered by a new race of men, who, curious to be acquainted with their predecessors, will rummage our tombs, in order to discover our bones, and find out what a singular race of barbarians we were.

The historian Bede teaches us that the Teutons, who made a descent on Great Britain, belonged to three different branches: 1. The Jutes, who established themselves in Kent, the Isle of Wight, and the opposite Hampshire coast; 2. The Saxons; and 3. The Angles. The investigations made by antiquarians among the tombs fully bear out this statement.

The Kentish tombs abound in gold and silver ornaments, jewellery, and various articles which indicate a somewhat refined social condition. The traits of a race, rich and more powerful than that of the other Anglo-Saxons, is found reflected on this posthumous industry. Elsewhere, the precious metals are rarely met with, and ornaments of gilt bronze take the place of gold: this difference explains to us the supremacy Kent exercised over the other states at the origin of Anglo-Saxon history. Shells brought from the Indian Ocean, pieces of money obtained from Constantinople and Germany—all these announce, even during a pagan period, an extensive trade with the rest of the world. These traces of the adventurous and trading genius must not be left out of sight by the moralist when they relate to the direct ancestors of the English nation, for we find in the Saxon tombs, and the growing wealth that accompany them, the dawn of the material prosperity of a great people.

The Anglo-Saxon barrows generally form a group of distinct character by the side of those whose origin antiquarians refer to the Normans and Saxons. They were the prototypes of modern graves, such as may be seen to-day in English country churchyards. The ancient Saxons dug a trench, varying from four to seven feet in depth, in which the corpse was laid on its back dressed in its best clothes. They surrounded it in addi-

tion with objects selected, there is ground for believing, from those the dead man preferred during life, and these were what the barbarian was fondest of—weapons. The hole was then filled up, and a mound of earth indicated the spot where the deceased slept his last sleep. Two modes of burial existed among the old Saxons during the pagan era: sometimes the body was buried whole, and sometimes burnt. I must add, that the funerals were often accompanied by the immolation of slaves.

The Anglo-Saxon race, even in death, is distinct from the two races with which it came in contact on earth—the Celts and the Romans. Beneath St. Leonard's church at Hythe is a crypt containing human skulls and bones, which do not belong to the same race. Two forms of skulls predominate: one, narrow and elongated, belongs to the Celtic type, such as it now exists in Great Britain; the other, short and wide, is referable to the Anglo-Saxon type. A small number of a different sort of skull is evidently of Roman origin, so that we have here before us the point of contact, if not of assimilation, between three families or peoples. In 1844, a large cemetery was also dug up at Fairford, in Gloucestershire, going back to the earliest period of the Saxon invasion, and extending over about four acres of land. This discovery took place by accident, at the time when an old pasture was being broken up for

arable purposes. In one of the trenches the skeleton of a giant was found, who must have been seven feet in height, and near the skull was an iron lance-head. This skull was of an egg shape, and forms a striking contrast with the skulls of the Celtic period. On seeing it, we need feel no surprise at these powerful Saxon heads having repulsed the natives. Were the history of the races lost, it would be found inscribed on the book of the human brain: their relative superiority, their conquests, their social influence, all are written there. The exhumations may serve to correct the portraits the ancients have left us of the Saxon races. These northern Hercules were remarkable for their large round heads, their lofty stature, and their great muscular energy; and if the dead found in the cemeteries were to rise from their tombs, they would have this formidable appearance.

At the present day nothing similar exists in England: the uniformity of the primitive Saxon type has, on the contrary, been succeeded by a great number of individual varieties. Whence come these differences? From two causes: the crossing of races, and the very unequal degrees of social development.

With the exception of the structure of the skull, the Saxons did not differ exceedingly from the Celts in their external features: both had a fair and white complexion, though the Saxon had

redder hair, while the colour of that of the Celts was flaxen. It was the same with their character: the Celts could vanquish, the Saxons conquer.* Bravery, lightness, want of constancy, no self-command—such were the principal traits of the Celtic nature: while the Saxons, firm, pertinacious, persevering, and gifted with a singular pride, showed themselves superior to ill fortune. Symmachus tells us that twenty-nine of them put themselves to death sooner than be exposed as a sight in a fight of gladiators. This opposition of manners was, however, as nothing when compared with the contrast existing between the political and social institutions of the two peoples. Among the Saxons, all the members of the community were free and warlike: they all wore arms, and took their place in battle or at the meetings. It was not the same among the Celts: with them the sacerdotal order of Druids and the military caste formed two privileged orders. So marked a difference gave rise to the antipathy which existed at the outset, and which exists to this day between the two races. Mr. Pinkerton is the echo of English prejudices when he declares that "a Goth is to a Celt what a lion is to an ass."

* It may be remarked that the English hardly ever use the word *vanquish*: they employ the word *conquer*. With them victory is as nothing but when it leads to conquest. This circumstance depends, among other causes, on the genius of the two races: the Celt displayed an indifference to material comfort not at all participated in by the Saxon.

We need seek in no other cause than this diversity of origin the causes for that instinctive repugnance displayed at times between English and Irish by acts deeply to be regretted.

In what proportion was this antagonism of character an obstacle to the blending of the two races? If we only regard the present distribution of the two human families over the soil of Great Britain, we should be tempted to believe that this obstacle was immense. You only find the Celtic type now-a-days in a state more or less pure in those districts of England and Ireland where there are chains of mountains. Such a localisation of type would seem to indicate at the first glance that the British race was driven back or retired before the conquest, not wishing to mingle with the conquerors. This migration might be admissible in the infancy of ethnographical studies, but it is no longer right to reason on such a basis. What took place in Great Britain was the same as occurs whenever two strange races come face to face, for it is the general law that the stronger should efface the weaker. Still, we must not imagine that the latter disappears without leaving traces, for the absorbed races live again in the absorbing races, whose character they enrich.

It is curious to observe how the Celtic race has diminished in Great Britain wherever it came in contact with the Anglo-Saxon tribes. The population of Cornwall, formerly purely Celtic, has at

the present day lost this character: in those districts of Wales and the Highlands, where the British blood has undergone an admixture with the invaders, the native race gradually loses its most marked features. The day will doubtless arrive when the ramparts of the wild mountains which served the Celts as a barrier against the sword of the Romans and the mace of the Saxons, will cease to offer any effectual resistance to the slow and silent intrusion of Teutonic trade, civilisation, and blood. The Saxon race (and this is one of its characteristics) is gifted with a far from common power of expansion, and wherever it extends, it sets its seal on the subjugated peoples.

We can, in conclusion, consider the English population as the product of a Celto-Saxon admixture, in which, however, the features of the Saxon race predominate. The language, government, and laws of Great Britain, all reveal a Gothic origin: the old Saxons live again not only in the annals of England, but also in the institutions and national character. More than thirty centuries have poured over their bones the flood of potential events, but in the midst of all this their influence has remained upright. They alone are the true ancestors of the English nation: the Celts were only the precursors.

Language is also a monument: now, but a very small number of Celtic words has taken root in English. That magnificent idiom which served

as an instrument for the genius of Milton and Shakspere, was created out of a mixture of Saxon with Roman, or the corrupt Latin of the middle ages. The absorption of the Celtic tongue indubitably expresses a law of nature which insists that the weaker races should be sacrificed to the development of the stronger, but we must not exaggerate the significance of the fact, and take into account the contempt the conquerors entertained for the manners, institutions, and tongue of the conquered. The marriage of two races is much like that of man and wife, in which the woman loses her name, but for all that does not resign her influence over the constitution of her children. If the traces of the old Celtic idiom have nearly disappeared from the English language, it is not the same with words employed to indicate localities, for the first holders of the soil, the Celts, christened the spots they occupied, and that so firmly, that the force of ulterior invasions could not pull up these landmarks of moral property. You find all through England and Scotland villages, rivers, woods, fields, mountains, which have not lost their British denomination. The English, in wedding the land, accepted into their language the sign of that union, and the shades of the old Celts would quiver could they hear the national hymn now sung by their valiant successors: Britannia rules the waves—for Britons never will be slaves.

We have now to compare the extinct with the living race. The Saxon type is spread all over England, but there are certain spots where it offers more distinct and decided features than others. One of these spots is Guildford in Surrey: its origin goes back to an ancient date: it was the residence of the Saxon kings of the West, and the ruins of their castle may still be seen there. Other buildings which give this old town a romantic character were formerly either public edifices or the abode of high personages. At present they are inhabited by tradesmen. Here, amid old remains of architecture and old memories, you find the Saxon in all his purity: you recognise him at once by his round and high-coloured face, by his robust and compact build. His framework is not so developed as among the Scotch and Irish Celts: he is stouter, but his shoulders are square and wide, his arms muscular, and his chest full. His legs and thighs, however, are not in harmony with the upper part of his body. Perhaps this last circumstance is both a feature of the peculiar type, and a result of civilisation, which applies itself more to mechanical arts, for in these sedentary tasks the extremities are sacrificed to the development of the chest and arms.

But if you wish to form an idea of the beauty of the Saxon type, you must look at the female. She is remarkable for light hair, blue eyes, coral

lips, cheeks ruddy as the flower to which they are so frequently compared, a skin as white and transparent as alabaster, delicate features, arms admirably modelled, a perfect bust, and an air of flourishing health, yet bearing the stamp of birth. Who cannot recognise a true Saxon woman by her walk? *incessu patuit dea:* you distinguish in it the movement of a haughty race, independent, mistress of itself, and all it thinks proper to subjugate. In this case the compression of fashion and artifice is less felt than elsewhere: the individuals grow like trees in all the vigour of their liberty.

Two features strike us in the highest degree in the character of the Saxons: their strength and greatness. They have imprinted these features on all their works, and first of all in the form of their cities. Look at London, that city which is constantly ending and beginning again. The cataract of Niagara makes less noise and smoke than that human tide, the population of London. This strange, colossal city, unique in the world, should be seen before all on one of those foggy days so frequent in November. The tawny mist grows still denser with all the torrents of smoke disgorged in the sky by the myriad of chimneys: if you look at your watch, it is eleven in the morning; if you gaze at the sky, it is still night. The gas-lamps flare, the shops in the Strand are lit up: men, lads as black as demons, wave torches which

they agitate even beneath the horses' feet. But what use is it? the light only shows more prominently the livid hue of the fog. Well, in this crawling mist, in this darkness of day, men come, go, pass each other with impassive, busy, silent faces, some in good clothes, others attired in the rags of poverty. You might fancy them shades moving restlessly in a tomb, and yet nothing is less fantastic, I assure you, than the object of their activity. Each, according to the range of his ideas, or his occupation, perceives in London a different city. M. Rothschild seeks there the bank of the whole world; the merchant the largest stage of business in existence; the breeder a vast market for cattle; the statesman the seat of government and the different branches of the administration; the man of pleasure the playbills or the tavern door; while the artist seeks and finds there all these at once. Whoever loves the sight of multitudes and immense cities, readily abandons the desert to the traveller. He finds in London that forest of men, a subject for contemplation equal in grandeur at least to all the prodigious scenes of nature. There is a species of charm and dizziness in studying all the phases of human life, whose variety is inexhaustible. And then, if you are wearied with the sight of a people buying and selling, the eternal rumble of wheels and horses, and steam-engines which even in London pass over your head with a shrill whistle, take

one step, and amid this dry solitude of the crowd you will find an oasis. One summer evening I was in Hyde Park: around me all was silent save the birds; cows were grazing in the pasturage, old and tall trees were shaking in the breeze their neglected locks, children were playing, swimming, and paddling in the Serpentine. In the midst of this immense horizon, which nothing limited but lines of verdure and the azure sky, I might have fancied myself a hundred leagues from a capital, and yet I was in London. But one of the most solemn prospects I know is London seen from a steam-boat. I cannot imagine a great city without a great river, for that is the vital artery of trade. The Thames itself is imbued with the English genius. It is gloomy, deep, and powerful: it bears on its back hundreds of steamers, which act as omnibuses, and go from one end to the other of the town under peculiar names, such as the *Dryad*, *Forget-me-not*, &c. Standing in the bows of one of these boats, you should survey the bridges of London, the public buildings, Westminster, St. Paul's, Somerset-house, and all the steeples which rise out of the mist with a spectral air, but above all the angular roofs of the old wharves, with their cranes and chains, which valiantly lift the massive and obscure riches of the whole world.

This character of strength and greatness is found in all the chief cities founded by the Saxon

race: it is reflected even on the creations of industry. In all its labours, the Saxon genius aims at the gigantic: it likes difficulties to overcome: it sets its pride on conquering the most rebellious facts. I was present on Plumstead marshes at the trial of a mortar such as the world had never seen, the very Falstaff of mortars. Its capacity is thirty-six inches, it fires with a thundering noise, and to a prodigious distance (about four miles), enormous bomb-shells, which bury themselves so deeply in the ground that it requires several days to find them again, even if they are found at all.

The Saxon race is a force: when an idea is added to this force, it goes far; but all the absolute qualities are exclusive: we must ask from every civilisation its own fruit, and no other. The works of the Saxon strike you more by their solidity than by any delicate seeking after form or elegance. This weak side of English industry is especially noticeable in the streets of London, where you see at each step a pile of wealth garnered in every shop with profusion, but without taste. Some linendrapers' shops have even recourse to Parisian hands to hide the insufficiency of the nation in this branch of commercial art. You can at the first glance distinguish a French from an English shop by the harmony of colours, that music formed to please the eyes. Architecture,

the products of the mechanical arts, everything indicates here the cyclopean feeling of the useful, deficient, to a certain extent, however, in a feeling of the beautiful.

The Saxon family is certainly the stem of the English nation; but other branches have been engrafted on this stem, whose origin and character we must now examine.

CHAPTER VII.

THE DANISH INVASION—THEIR TRADITIONS—HISTORY OF A MERMAID —INVASION OF THE NORMANS — INFLUENCE OF THAT EVENT ON ENGLISH CIVILISATION — ENGLAND AND SCOTLAND COMPARED — BLACK HAIR AND BLACK EYES — PRESENT CHARACTER OF THE ENGLISH—CHRISTMAS FESTIVITIES—SCENES OF DOMESTIC LIFE.

THE Saxon race did not long remain in tranquil possession of the country, for about the middle of the tenth century those daring adventurers who had long desolated the northern seas by their piracies, began disturbing the English coasts. Their first enterprises were crowned with success; and this encouraged them to resume their ravages; and at last, towards the beginning of the eleventh century, they became masters of the greater portion of old Albion. The vulgar tongue has given the name of Danes to these new invaders of England; but they belonged to that group of Scandinavian nations then living in Sweden and Norway. Norway, whose jagged coasts extend along a tumultuous ocean from the rocks of the Baltic to the circle of the Arctic Seas, was the most

sterile of the sterile northern regions. The means of subsistence were scant, the inhabitants daring, and hence they asked from maritime expeditions the resources which an ungrateful territory refused them. Their vessels, like the travelling icebergs of their savage country, drifted at the mercy of wind and tide; their principal divinity was the sword. These peoples were, like the old Saxons, the marauders of the seas; they threw themselves with the courage and avidity of the cormorant on the prey they were able to seize, on the crest of the waves or along the coasts. It is a shame to say so, but piracy was generally the cradle of navigation and trade for the maritime races of the north. What was, however, the historic origin of these ancient Scandinavians?

The first inhabitants of the countries situated beyond the Baltic were strangers to the Germanic race. The more recent studies of northern antiquities have demonstrated that the Finns constituted, with the Lapp tribes, the most ancient layer of the historic population. These natives were either expelled or subjugated by a race possessing different characteristics, another language, and another religion, and this last race was a branch of the Teutonic tree. The invaders commenced a war of extermination on the natives, which ended in a conquest. It is sad and curious to see by what efforts and what lavish bloodshed these peoples gained their place in the world one

after the other. The episodes of this long war supplied the motive for more than one legend and poem, sung by the ancient Scalds or bards. To the south of Scandinavia, the religion, government, and language of the Germans were established prior to Odin's time: when that chief arrived at the head of his valiant warriors, he combined with the Goths, who already occupied a portion of the territory, to expel the rest of the aboriginal tribes. The latter were then compelled to seek refuge in the mountains, where they are still found, that separate Norway from Sweden. The northerners, henceforth known by the name of Vikinger, who, between the ninth and eleventh centuries threw themselves on the English coasts, were the descendants of the invaders of Scandinavia; all proves clearly that they were allied to the same race whence the Saxons sprang. Their dialect, in spite of evident features of affinity, certainly varied from the language spoken in central Germany, and those parts of England over which the Teutonic invasion had extended; and this difference indicates that they were separated from the common stem at a distinct and probably very remote epoch.

The new deluge of men did not exert any very marked influence over the civilisation which was beginning to be formed by the fusion of the Celts and Saxons. A race may ravage and subjugate a country without conquering it, and the Danes

never conquered England. This invasion—the third in date—only glided over Saxon society. The Danes, during their short passage, which lasted hardly more than fifty years, left very few traces in the English language, scanty memorials, and hardly any osteological history. Still, it is very probable that they intermarried, for who would venture to affirm that no drop of Scandinavian blood now runs in English veins? and then, when the ethnologist speaks of the influence of the Northmen on the formation of the British type, he has not solely in view the tumultuous invasion of the Danes at a certain epoch. There is another source of change, less marked by history, but more continuous, certain, and effective: I mean the slow and silent settlement of the northern races on some of the coasts of Britain, where—as for instance in the Highlands and the Isle of Man—there are evident traces of Scandinavianism. Not only is the blood mingled there, but the manners offer so intimate a combination of the customs, superstition, and character of the two races, that it is often very difficult to discover the source. It is still a custom among some Highland families to throw a piece of silver into the grave, for, were this not done, the soul of the deceased would not be removed into heaven. It is hard to decide whether such a belief is Celtic or Scandinavian; but the legends referring to the existence of mermen and mermaids come certainly from the north.

The inhabitants of the Shetland Isles believe that these supernatural beings possess a seal-skin, which serves them as a charm, and permits them to live in the depths of ocean, and, had they not this talisman, they would at once lose these amphibious qualities. With regard to this, a story is told about a man belonging to Unst, who, walking along the sand, saw a group of these singular beings dancing in the moonlight, and a considerable number of seal-skins lying near them on the shore. Each ran to pick up its own, and the whole band disappeared like magic in the sea; but the Shetlander, having noticed one of the skins at his feet, seized it, and hid it securely. On his return, he found on the beach the loveliest maiden who ever displayed herself to mortal sight; she was lamenting with many tears and sobs the theft which compelled her to remain an exile on land. In vain did she implore the restitution of her talisman, but the man was mad with love and proved inexorable; all he would do for her was to offer her his protection, and a shelter beneath his roof as his wife, and the mermaid, seeing that there was no way of joining her old friends, accepted the offer. This singular conjugal attachment between a Shetlander and a daughter of the sea lasted several years, and a number of children were the result. These children were like any other children, except that they had, as a mark of their origin, their fingers slightly flattened.

This peculiarity has remained in the family to the present day, as a testimony of the fact. The love the Shetlander bore his wife was unbounded, but his affection was coldly returned; she would frequently stop away, and walk alone on the beach; at a given signal, some one appeared in the sea, some one with whom the ex-mermaid kept up a restless conversation in an unknown language. One day it happened that a child of hers accidentally found a seal-skin hidden (we may guess by whom) under a mill-wheel, and, quite proud of his discovery, he ran to show it to his mother. The latter started; her joy was only troubled when she looked at the boy, whom she was about to leave for ever; she kissed him, and fled at full speed towards the sands. At this moment the husband returned home; he learned that the seal-skin had been found, guessed the rest, and ran to stop his wife: but he arrived just in time to witness the transformation of that beloved being: he saw her leap, in the shape of a seal, from a projecting rock into the sea. The mysterious being with whom she had held so many secret interviews, an enormous seal, appeared and congratulated her in the tenderest manner on the success of her flight. Before plunging into the waves, she gave a last glance at the poor denizen of earth, whose despair doubtless aroused in her some feeling of compassion: "Farewell!" she said to him; "I wish you every sort of hap-

piness. I loved you dearly when I lived on land, but I always loved my first husband better than you."

The Danes were not the last conquerors of England, for, in 1066, the Normans, led by their chief, William, seized the government of the country. These Northmen, settled for some time past on the coasts of Normandy, were Norwegians or Danes, and had not brought their wives with them. These adventurers formed alliances with Frenchwomen, and adopted, in the course of time, the manners of the country they had subjugated. They were, therefore, mostly Celts on the mothers' side, Celts, Romans, or Germans on the fathers', for this band of invaders was composed of mingled races: Britons, Flemings, Walloons, and others swelled the conqueror's army. We see from this fact that the Norman invasion brought no new blood into England; at the most there was a slight difference in the tinge of Germanism, and they were rather Franks than Angles. But, although the mixture was so heterogeneous, the arrival of the Normans did not the less exercise the most grave and fortunate consequences on the genesis of the English people.

About a century after William's landing, when the violence of the conquest had yielded to a gentler mode of government, this foreign element gave the form to the entire mass hitherto so dif-

fuse and incoherent, and a national type then made its appearance which has never had its counterpart in history. Eight centuries have passed away since that time, and have only served to strengthen the powerful originality of that race, which is distinguished from all others by its manners, character, and external features. This spectacle is grand, and impresses me; it is glorious to see with what care and what a chain of events nature labours to form peoples destined to exercise an influence upon civilisation. The history of such nations is written in their physical organisation; still it must be strong, rich, and varied. The native races that originally covered Great Britain were too weak to answer the views of Providence with regard to this group of isles; hence they were conquered, trampled down, and partly destroyed, the Saxons taking their place. The Saxons, in their turn, were powerless of themselves to engender England, *tantæ molis erat condere gentem;* they were overrun by the Danes, and both nations, at first fighting, ended by being fused into one family. But that is not enough; the Normans arrive, and their accession at length realises that type of people towards which nature had been so long aspiring. This material and moral creation demands, in the course of ages, gigantic efforts and human sacrifices; but catastrophes, revolutions, deluges of people piled up,

strata on strata, bones on bones, do not stop or impede the calm and majestic development of progress.

Still, we must not exaggerate the nature of the influence the Normans exercised on England, for they were more a connecting link than an element of the population. Their blood has long been mingled with that of the Saxons and other British nations, and though I do not assert that it is lost, it would at this day be very difficult to find authentic traces, even among the English aristocracy. The Saxons, in crushing the Celts, imposed their language on them; but the Norman victors accepted the language of the conquered race. William the Conqueror certainly tried to introduce his dialect, the Franko-Norman, among his new subjects, but his efforts were not crowned with success. After him, the court continued for some time to speak French, and that foreign language was one of the signs that separated it from the nation, which remained attached to the old idiom. About the year 1150, the Saxons began that work of transformation which, continued throughout the middle ages, produced the English language. British philologists will not admit that the change was due to the Norman invasion, for they say, very few words had slipped into the national dialect. There are certainly, at the present day, many French words in the English language, but they appear to have been in-

troduced at a later date. It is still a subject of doubt and dispute among philologists, whether these intruders really came from over the water, or were formed on the spot by the decomposition of Latin roots, a language which had begun to flourish again. Linguistic researches, in accordance with other testimony, indicate, therefore, that the Norman nation, far from incorporating England, was itself absorbed into the conquest.

Ethnology contains moral instruction, for it reconciles all races in a feeling of humanity. This science teaches us, in fact, that the human families each possess different gifts and peculiar instincts, an intellect moulded on a type of special organisation, external features which all have a relative beauty, and aptitudes which respond to certain wants of the social condition. It is by shaking and mingling these elements in the sacred urn of nations, that Providence forms the living matter of history. Simple races manifest faculties equally simple and limited: on the other hand, the more races are mingled, the more does the national character abound in shades which, by their very opposition, tend to ramify the resources of civilisation. You have, then, before you the imposing spectacle of variety in unity: the English is a composite nation, and hence its strength. In those parts of Great Britain where the crossing of races has been less complicated, the organisation of the inhabitants offers a more uniform, and,

consequently, less rich instrument. In Scotland, for instance (and I borrow the remark from Hugh Miller, himself a Scotchman), the human face offers fewer individual and peculiar traits than in England.

The English, though regarded as the most robust men in Europe, do not display the externals of rude and primitive strength to such an extent as the Scotch; but they possess limbs better adapted to the diverse exigencies of the mechanical arts. If you pay attention to the moral character, the contrast becomes even more striking; in the rural districts of old Caledonia, you find nothing resembling that class of coarse, brutalised, idling individuals, unhappily too common in the same districts of England. Their round face, and thoroughly Saxon features, sufficiently indicate that they descend from barbarian ancestors, and that their intellect, that "Sleeping Beauty in the wood," has continued to slumber for ages in the night of ignorance. The mass of the Scotch population is more cultivated and better educated than the mob in certain parts of England; but, on the other hand, if the population of Northern Britain does not descend so low, it never rises so high as the English nation. Scotland has certainly produced remarkable men, but she has hitherto been asked in vain for a Milton, a Shakspere, or a Byron. Walter Scott alone, and he in an inferior style of writing, at-

tained the first rank. The English nation, properly so called, is a human pianoforte of incomparable range, which contains the lowest and basest notes, but also rises to the highest known in intellect. If ethnology be not a chimera, the explanation of this is easily discovered: Scotland has been less exposed than England to invasion, and therefore less subjected to the causes of intellectual diversity successive crossings impress to a certain extent on the blood of a race.

One fact staggers me, I confess, when I regard the English population, and that is, the great quantity of black hair and eyes. Pritchard made the same observation before me, and even estimated the proportion of brown persons at eighty per cent. This fact the more surprises me, when I reflect that all the races which went to compose the English nation, Celts, Saxons, Danes, and Normans, had light hair and blue eyes. It would be puerile to attribute this change to the relations the English have entered into with southern nations, for, although I do not say that these relations, founded on trade, were insignificant in the completion of the national type—for they certainly produced intermarriages which, renewed from age to age, grafted fresh offshoots on the genealogical tree of the English nation—still a fortuitous and partial cause could not, in any case, explain a general fact. And then, again, the proof that this argument is not good is, that such a work of trans-

formation has been effected in those parts of Great Britain where nothing of the sort has happened. The population of the Highlands, for instance, is sheltered behind its mountains from any infusion of foreign, or at any rate southern blood. It is, moreover, a credible tradition that the ancient inhabitants, the Gaels, formed, like the first Britons, a light-haired race. The present Highlanders, however, do not constitute a people of the same character; in some districts, but only of limited extent, the inhabitants have at this day red hair, and nothing indicates the trace of a foreign colony; but the characters predominating in a great portion of the Highlands, specially to the west, are black and straight hair, grey eyes, and a complexion no longer retaining the original whiteness. It has been remarked, that in all towns, the colour of the hair and eyes is browner than in the rural districts, especially among the forests and mountains, and that the ancient type is better preserved in parts where it was to some extent protected by nature: elsewhere, it has altered.

The conclusion to be derived from these facts is evidently that, without any intervention of foreign races, the present race has diverged from the conditions existing among those tribes which formed the population of England. Where is the cause of such a phenomenon now to be sought? The changes that have occurred in the shape of

the skull have already taught us that the human organisation was not stationary; in the same way as children are frequently born with light hair and complexion, which they lose as they advance in age, so the races put off with maturity the signs of adolescence. The temperament changes: the hair and eyes become of a deeper colour. This crossing of races is a further argument in favour of Pritchard's ideas, which now are predominant in England. Not satisfied with affirming the unity of species, this great ethnologist has insinuated that the different families, despite the very grave accidents of form and colour, were only different ages of the human race.

Such are the events which have accomplished the national type, and it is now left me to say what that is. What strikes me most in British civilisation and the English character, is the personality. In Belgium and Holland, I felt I had one foot still on the moral soil of France, which extends far beyond the frontiers. Here there is nothing of the sort: on the contrary, you feel yourself carried away by a civilisation, gifted like certain planets with a peculiar movement of its own. From this island, continental life appears like the French coast from Dover hill: it is a point scarce visible to the eye in the immensity of the mist. In the world of London, every foreigner is regarded by the lower classes as a Frenchman: before the Exhibition of 1851, he was too often a

French pig. I conclude from this that the British masses only recognise the right of existence for two peoples in the world, themselves first, and then the French. It is not my opinion that the enlightened portion of the British nation is indifferent to continental affairs, but it regards the events taking place abroad principally with reference to its own interests. This feeling of self, the moral root of the English freedom and institutions, is allied to a decided taste for lengthened expeditions, and a sort of adventurous humour which spreads the children of Britain over the whole face of the globe. The motto of the artillery, inscribed in metallic letters on the uniform, is surely that of the whole nation, *Ubique;* but the Englishman carries his habits and way of life everywhere with him: he is always at home. I have seen peoples very punctilious on the point of national honour; the least critical observation vexed them; but before an Englishman you may indicate the weak signs of British civilisation and not even irritate him: he is silent, but it is the silence of contempt. In most of the histories placed in the hands of youth, there is hardly mention of days unlucky to English arms. As, for instance, the battle of Bouvines. In the sight of Englishmen there is no such thing as defeat: it is an error of fortune. When they speak of their victories, they do so without boasting: Dame Fortune had done her duty this time, that was all. From this moral dis-

position springs an unbounded confidence in the imperishable greatness of the nation, even when you pretend to believe in its decadence. "England for ever!" is the war cry, the voice of the British blood.

Nothing, besides, is considered too dear to ensure this rational being a moral superiority. I have met Englishmen who deplored certain facts in the Indian war, the sacrifices of men and money it necessitated, and the causes which provoked it; but even among those holding such an opinion, there was probably not one who did not believe that England must conquer at any price, for the sake of maintaining her prestige in Europe. The Englishman only devotes himself to England, and such preoccupation of the national feeling does not dispose the British islanders to any lively sympathy with foreigners. There are, however, cases where the character contradicts itself, and one of these exceptions is so honourable that I am bound to quote it. In a court of law the feelings of the judges and the public are always in favour of the foreigner. Each is then of opinion that the law is bound to protect the man whom his native soil does not protect.

Another characteristic feature of British civilisation is the division of labour. I am not alluding solely to the economic principle, but to a fact, and a marked disposition in the race. Each man shuts himself up with a species of scrupulousness

in the circle of his attributes and acquirements. There are in the United Kingdom very few universal minds, but you find there many special talents: some peoples guess, or fancy they guess at, many things, but the Englishman knows only what he has learned; it is true that he understands it thoroughly. Education fortifies at an early age this natural inclination: in Great Britain the instruction of children presupposes an object, and that is the career the young man will some day enter on in the world; in this way pupils are formed with powerful and practical faculties. This system, I grant, offers inconveniences along with advantages, for it limits the horizon of human acquirement to a thoroughly personal domain, but that domain is more fully explored. Such a hierarchy of functions must greatly simplify the exercise of public liberty. The English have understood their society as a great machine whose thousands of springs play without interfering with other organs, and concur to realise, by the different forces, the greatest amount of productiveness and comfort. The natural formation of a great city should be studied in London; and it is curious to see how the various trades and liberal professions are collected in limited districts. This aggregation of similarity was neither fortuitous nor imposed, it was produced by virtue of those laws which determine in England the departments of labour. The impulse did not come

from a centre: each of these circles, on the contrary, is seen to be animated by its own movement; they attract each other without any shock or collision. The English constitution, with its limits and counterpoises, is an image of the same tendency to balance liberties by dividing the antagonism of powers; we may doubtless dream of another political ideal, but, unless a man be greatly prejudiced, it is difficult for him not to be struck by the complicated and majestic mechanism of institutions which have been at work for ages, which protect all individual liberty, and ensure peace to Great Britain without imposing the sacrifice of any conquest, civil or moral.

Very grand, to my mind, is the use the English have made, and still make, of the right of assembly; and they are too well aware of the value of that right to compromise it by sterile or rash tentatives. I was present in St. Martin's Hall at a meeting convened by the Sunday League, a society which combats the Judaic observance of Sunday by seeking to open to the inhabitants of London museums and other public edifices on that day. This so simple reform is one of those which meet with the greatest resistance in England, because it has against it the religious feeling, the usages, and high influence of the national Church. A workman sitting by my side said to me, "We know very well we shall not succeed this time, or this year or the next, but in our

country we know how to ask and wait; in that way, you are sure to win the day." On seeing such discipline, such perseverance, and such an intrepid and calm faith in the strength of public opinion, you are no longer surprised that the English people obtain all reasonable reforms without shaking the basis of a constitution which opens so sure a road to progress. The limit of political liberty is here in the manners and the feeling of duty; each man is his own censor; he wishes his own rights to be respected, but he knows how to respect those of others. These moral conditions ensure the maintenance of independence even better than public meetings and other civil guarantees, for Liberty is a respectable female; she does not bestow her hand on that people which seeks her with the most ardour, but on the one that deserves her.

A nation so agitated by the tempest of business as the English needed an anchor, and found it in the family. Home holds a great place in British life. I like above all the word employed to characterise it: the *chez soi* is egotistic; the hearth only embraces a detail of domestic manners; but the English home expresses all there is most complete, delicate, and touching in the temple of the family and private virtues. There is in England an entire literature for the fireside: published at a cheap rate, and consisting of magazines, miscellanies, tales, and romances. This home library,

I allow, if regarded æsthetically, is of no great value, and I can easily understand why the critics have generally disdained it; but it possesses a peculiar interest for the moralist.

The Englishman is at home what he is in his island: not easily accessible, reserved, and cold; he does not endure his relations, but selects them; still, when the ice is once broken, he displays a great, good, and generous heart. It is the same with the connexion between the members of the family: the banishment of the "thou" from the language (in England it is only employed in addressing the Deity), spreads, at the first blush, a certain degree of indifference over the family bonds; but you speedily recognise beneath these sterner forms a deeply rooted attachment. This inner life is closely connected with the religious order, and Anglican Protestantism has, as it were, transported worship from the church into the house. The great Christian festivals are at the same time family rejoicings; the English are before all a people of tradition, and with them custom is specially holy. Of these religious solemnities the most deeply engraved in the manners is Christmas.

Preparations are made for it weeks in advance. Immense flocks of geese march gravely from the north of England upon London; huge oxen announce their arrival on railways or steam-boats by gloomy lowing. The meat is piled up pyramidi-

cally before the butcher's shop, and it is especially at night, in the populous quarters of London, say Whitechapel, that you should see these mountains of comestibles by the light of the myriad gas-burners which flicker in the breeze.

I can still remember the face of London on my first Christmas-day there. The distant thunder of the wheels on the pavement or macadam, and the busy agitation of the crowd, which on the previous evening had been flowing in a hundred cross currents, were suddenly succeeded by a religious silence and repose. Nothing was audible save the voice of the thousand bells spreading through the dry and cold atmosphere. The shadows of night fell from the sky in large patches, like the black cloths are removed from the roof of a church after a funeral ceremony. It was eight o'clock, and the streets were still deserted: it looked like a city whose inhabitants had gone to heaven. The curtain of the morning mist was beginning to be unfolded: a precocious snow had whitened the streets: it was the festal robe, and in this snow might be seen the footsteps of men and women who had gone to church. All the shops were closed, with the exception of the bakers', to which men, women, and children were solemnly carrying pies and puddings, pieces of raw meat and poultry, in dishes covered by a white napkin. The little street sweepers, with their red feet on the white snow, were blowing their fingers, and with a smile on their lips were

amusing the passer-by by turning somersaults, and then pursuing him for a halfpenny as a Christmas-box. The service is over in the churches, and the baker's oven has done its duty: it is one o'clock, and you then see the people emerging from church; the joints come forth gradually from the bakers', and are borne home triumphantly by the hard hands of labour.

The festival, however, is not buried; it springs to life again on the next day, and is prolonged, in spite of the resumption of labour, for six weeks. The theatre with its pantomimes, the Crystal Palace with its winter amusements, concerts, balls—all combine to retain for a long period that well-beloved guest of Great Britain, Father Christmas, whose head is crowned simultaneously with ice and leaves. Christmas, after all, is, in spite of January the first, the English anniversary; I leave out of sight the religious view: but the English think it right the year should commence in a cradle, since that cradle regenerated the world.

Such are the general traits of the national character. English life changes with the classes, the trades, and the locality: it is not the same in towns and country, and hence must be followed at the various scenes. This task will be the more easy for us, now we have seen the origin of the population and the various elements of which it is formed.

CHAPTER VIII.

CHARM WHICH GIPSIES ADD TO AN ENGLISH LANDSCAPE — WHAT ENGLISH WRITERS SAY OF THEM—WHAT THE GIPSIES THINK OF THEMSELVES AND THEIR ORIGIN — LEGENDS — VARIOUS OPINIONS ABOUT THEM—ARE THEY JEWS?—THEIR HISTORY—THEIR LANGUAGE—THEIR MARCH ACROSS ASIA AND EUROPE — THEIR CHARACTER IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY—PERSECUTIONS THEY ENDURED.

THE English population was fixed, when, after centuries, an eccentric and nomadic element was added to the races already established on British soil. The gipsies are not peculiar to the United Kingdom: there is not a retired and uncultivated nook in Europe, Asia, or Africa, which has not seen the smoke of their encampments rise, nor a *lande* which the tooth of their horses and donkeys has not nibbled. They have hung up their caldrons to the projecting branches of the oak, and the rugged trunk of the elm; their tents have been raised from the snows of Russia to the burnt sierras of Spain, from the Himalayan chain to the wild range of the Andes: but there is probably no spot in the world so well suited as

Old England for the study of this dispersed and mysterious race.

The traveller who contents himself with visiting the great towns and devouring distances on the railway, notices very slightly the existence of gipsies in England; in the country, on the other hand, the contrast of their manners and features with those of the rural population, forms one of the most curious episodes of rustic life. Though generally looked askant at and feared by the English peasants, they spread over the landscape a species of rude and primitive poesy. In spring, when the woods are green and the hedges white, you often discover a large black spot in a deep and umbrageous road: the gipsies have passed there, and this spot marks the place where their fire died out. Their carts, of primitive style, their oval face, the peculiar character of their black eyes, their regular but hard features, their brown complexion, the hair of the women hanging down either side of the face in long curls, which for their blackness and polish have been compared to the raven's wing, the rude songs they often sing among the rocks, the pride of their carriage, which is free and worthy even under rags, the look of indifference and even contempt which they give to the signs of labour, —all this distinguishes them from the Saxon and Gallic races. They are the savages, the Mohicans of Great Britain.

A struggle has been carried on from the outset between the sedentary and nomadic element, and has generally ended in a compact which assures the gipsies certain advantages. I will not venture to say that they are better off in England than in other countries, but they are more independent, more at home, so to speak, and their costume more or less picturesque, their dances, their music, their tents, are an obligato accompaniment to all rustic festivities. If they form an unsubjected and distinct element of the population, they are brought into daily collision with the agricultural class, and this contact has modified the primitive manners on both sides. Something would be wanting to English life, especially in the country, if the gipsies no longer existed, and they must naturally find a place in these essays. They are attached to Great Britain like mistletoe to the oak, and botanists do not describe a tree without alluding to its parasites.

We shall not now feel surprise at hearing that a race so distinct and so closely allied with local customs has fixed the attention of English savans and moralists. In 1816, John Hoyland published an inquiry into the condition of the gipsies in Great Britain, which is not without interest, and which would be more frequently consulted, had not Mr. George Borrow recently opened an entirely new field of researches. During his youth, Mr. Borrow lived with the gipsies; he speaks their

language, and is regarded by them as one of their brothers. He has read their character and most secret thoughts. After studying the life of the gipsies in England, he travelled and found in various parts of Europe bands who, hearing him speaking their tongue, believed in a tie of consanguinity. He sat under their tents, warmed himself at their fires, and thus was enabled to compare the different branches of this dispersed human family. The desire of spreading the Bible in Spain led him to the Peninsula in 1836, where his tribulations as missionary, his adventures, his travels, and imprisonments, supplied him with the matter for a curious book. There he again met with his friends the gipsies, under the name of Zincali: he brought them news from their English brothers, and was everywhere heartily welcomed. They did not touch a hair of his head, for the children of Egypt do not injure or rob one another. This new scene gave him the idea of a work on gipsy life generally, but more especially of the Spanish Gitanos. The principal merit of this book is, that it is not made up from other books; the author describes what he saw and learned about the gipsies, from the mouth of the gipsies themselves during twenty years.

Imagination has disputed with science for a vein so rich in interest: English literature, the stage, painting, music, have borrowed a few celebrated types from the gipsy character. Still, we

must be on our guard against these romantic fictions, the germ of which was nearly in all cases supplied by hasty impressions. Nothing so little resembles gipsy life on the stage or in books, as the life of these same gipsies as met in nature. We will try to penetrate the secret of a race, itself an enigma in the book of realities. This people, now spread over the surface of the globe, has everywhere lost its annals, its traditions, its gods, even the memory of its ancestors: cannot its history be restored? The present condition of the gipsies is miserable; will it not be fair to study in their mode of life the cause of their degradation? A few facts seem to indicate that this abjectness is not irremediable; the point is, then, to determine what are their means of moral regeneration. In a word, the question of the gipsies can be regarded from three points of view: what they were, what they are, and what they might be. A peculiar interest attaches, if I am not mistaken, to this ancient and unhappy race, which protests, by its physical beauty, especially in England, against the curse that pursues it.

Whence do the gipsies come? If we accepted the legend current in some Catholic countries, the origin and dispersion of the modern gipsies would be quickly explained. This is the legend: their ancestors, who were Egyptians, refused an asylum to the Virgin and her Son, when those exiles withdrew to Egypt to fly the wrath of

Herod. It is even added, that they refused to draw a little water from the Nile for the thirsting mother and infant. For this crime God punished the Egyptians. He sent them, poor, wandering, and wretched, among all the other nations of the world. Unfortunately, one objection can be raised to this legend, and that is, that these pretended Egyptians have nothing in common with Egypt, and modern travellers have found bands of gipsies seated under the palm-trees at Cairo, and in the villages bordering the Nile. These gipsies were regarded as strangers by the inhabitants of Egypt just as much as they are in England. Their features and mode of life, besides, distinguished them from the local population.

The most extraordinary circumstance is, that this Egyptian origin, in spite of the facts that apparently contradict it, has been generally accepted by the wandering gipsies of every country. If you ask them, they will all reply that they came from Egypt: they are of the royal blood of the Pharaohs; they will even speak with pride of the antique grandeur of their imaginary country. They have also their legend: "There was once upon a time a great king in Egypt, and his name was Pharaoh. He had numerous armies, with which he waged war on all nations, and at length conquered every one. Now, when he had conquered the whole world, he grew sad and weary; for, as he loved war, he did not know how to

employ his time. At length he determined to declare war against God: he therefore sent Him a challenge, inviting Him to descend from heaven with His angels, and fight Pharaoh and his hosts. God answered, 'I will not measure my strength with that of a man.' He was not the less inflamed with wrath against Pharaoh, however, and, to punish him, opened a hole in the side of an enormous mountain: then He let loose a furious wind, which drove before it Pharaoh and his armies. Whoever now approaches this mountain on St. John's night, can hear Pharaoh and his hosts singing and yelling in the depths of the cave. And it happened that when Pharaoh and his armies had disappeared, all the kings of the nations which had undergone the yoke of Egypt revolted against the conquering nation, which, having lost its king and armies, remained quite defenceless. These foreign kings made war on it and conquered it, and drove before them the Egyptian people, which dispersed over the whole world. Such is the reason why the horses of the gipsies now drink the waters of the Neva, the Tagus, the Seine. and the Thames, instead of those of the Nile."

The most probable opinion is, that the tradition attaching the gipsies to ancient Egypt does not come from themselves, but was suggested to and forced on them by the mediæval theologians. Such a descent was, in fact, founded on a mystic inter-

pretation of certain passages in the Bible: hence the opinion universally admitted until very recently, that the gipsies were Egyptians, scattered among the other nations by the sword of the Assyrians. As for the nomadic hordes of the accursed people, they had forgotten, on their arrival in Europe, even the name of their native land. Whence did they come, where were they going? Sooner ask the stream whence its waters come, or the cloud whither it is going! Such ignorance is surprising, but harmonises with the reckless character of these vagabond tribes. All leads to the belief, besides, that a long period occurred between their dispersion and their arrival in the civilised states of the Christian world. Having no traditions, they readily accepted those pointed out to them, for so great is the want of a moral country to man, that, when historic reality is wanting, he asks nothing better than to hang on to a fiction.

Other historians believe they have found in the gipsies the two lost tribes of the house of Israel. The fate of the Romany certainly offers us some features of affinity with that of the Jews: both are dispersed over the world, and live among Christian populations, with whom they are not mingled; both have borne for centuries the weight of persecution, contempt, and public malevolence. Here, however, the resemblance ceases. A Jew recognises a Jew, even if both belong to two distinct branches of the root of Israel, separated for seven-

teen hundred years and more: a gipsy recognises a gipsy, even if one has been rendered pale by the snows of Sweden, and the other browned, were that possible, by the fire of the tropics: but a gipsy would never recognise his brother in a Jew, or a Jew believe himself of gipsy race. Their life, character, and manners too, are full of contrasts. The Jews seek towns, the centres of population, where they can trade: the gipsies, on the contrary, spread over the country and the heaths; they live exceptionally in towns, and only when necessity compels it. On the other hand, the children of Israel are becoming daily more attached to Christian society; the English Jews feel an honour in being born under the flag of Britain, but the gipsies are of no country; they are found everywhere, and are everywhere strangers. The intellectual development, moreover, creates a radical difference between the two races. The first have preserved in their exile the lights of a puissant civilisation, while the Romany, scattered here and there, in patriarchal families, going incessantly from one spot to another, with their tents and their cattle, seem the relics of a wandering caste which has never shaken off the darkness of ignorance.

The gipsies are neither Egyptians nor Jews. What are they, then?

Their language is the history of those races which no longer possess historical monuments.

Now, the gipsies have a language of their own—a same language, which they speak, with slight variations, in those countries where they are found—and that is everywhere. In the streets of Moscow and Madrid, of London and Constantinople, in the plains of Hungary, and the burning solitudes of Brazil, the wind scatters the strange sounds of this idiom, which has everywhere a character of unity in its principal features. This language has been analysed by philologists, who have found in it Sanscrit roots more or less corrupted. Sanscrit itself has long ceased to be a spoken language in India. It is the sacred language—the language of the learned—in which the principal documents of the national faith and literature were recorded; but it is incontestable that at some period Sanscrit was of common use among the different Hindoo tribes. A German philologist, Büttner, was the first to suspect that the gipsies came from the old Indian race, and this Indian origin was afterwards proved and demonstrated by Grellman. Prichard, the historian of the human races, did not doubt of the truth of this descent, and he added the light of philology to those of history and language. The features of the gipsies are like the Hindoo type. Prichard merely drew attention to the fact that these wandering tribes, although relatively very brown in Europe, are of a much lighter colour than the Hindoos of the lower classes, who are frequently as black as

the negroes of Guyana. He attributes this change of colour to climatic influences.

The gipsies descend, then, by migration, from an Indian tribe: but to what caste do they belong? Evidently to one very inferior. There is in the laws of Menou a passage which I have never seen quoted—and I am surprised at this—by the authors who have paid attention to the gipsies. The legislator is speaking of a species of men composed of mixed races: they are the Tchandalas, of whom he says: "Their dwellings must be outside the village, they must not have whole vessels, and their entire property must consist of dogs and asses. For clothing, let them have the garments of the dead; for dishes, broken pots; for ornaments, iron. Let them move incessantly from one place to another; they must only carry on business among themselves, and marry their like." This sentence strikes me, when I compare the life of the Tchandalas with the present condition of the gipsies, collected in bands or families, covered with rags, leading in slavery horses or dogs, having only broken furniture and utensils, intermarrying, and camping but for a day or two near villages, whence they disappear as suddenly as they came. It seems, besides, certain, according to the statement of English travellers, that wandering tribes still continue to traverse Hindostan.

Captain Richardson found in India, especially at Calcutta, a race of beings known by the name

of *Bazeegars* or *Nuts*. They gain a livelihood by playing various instruments, singing, dancing, and acrobatic performances. Among these Nuts, one tribe especially bears a resemblance to our European gipsies: that of the Budee. They have no peculiar religious system, and adopt indifferently that of the village near which they are encamped. They wander about in troops, having a chief for each division, and are accused of being mighty thieves. By comparing their vocabulary with that of the gipsies, the author arrives at the conclusion that the gipsies are descended from a branch of the Bazeegars. This diversity of opinion shows sufficiently that, if the Indian origin of European gipsies is clearly established, it is not so easy to discover to what particular family of Hindoos they must be referred, and a cloud continues to cover their history, as far as this is concerned. However this may be, the old presence of gipsies on the soil of Great Britain proves that India came to seek England ere England set out to find India.

Not satisfied with searching out the cradle of the gipsies, some German and English writers have tried to penetrate the nature of the event which dispersed them over the world. These floating hordes can tell us nothing as to the cause of their exile, or the other points relating to their emigration: though Indians, the gipsies remember nothing of India. The most generally received opinion is, that the gipsies were separated from

the parent tree, and thrown like a dead branch into the torrent of their vagabond destiny, by one of the most terrible invasions of which history has preserved the memory. From 1408 to 1409, India was ravaged by a famous conqueror known by the name of Timour-leng, or Tamerlane: all that offered a resistance were destroyed, and we are told of the butchery of half a million human beings. Those who fell into the hands of the conqueror were made slaves, and frequently even slavery itself did not protect them against fresh outbreaks of homicidal fury. The gipsies, according to Grellman, were torn from the mother country by the disasters of this war. I must add, however, that serious objections have been raised to this theory: the gipsies most assuredly belonged to one of those poor and obscure classes in India (Grellman says the *Sudras*) which suffer the least from foreign invasion. Having nothing to defend, and nothing to lose, why should they have taken flight? This horrible war was certainly a religious one: now, judging by their present state of religious indifference, the gipsies were the persons in the world the least disposed to repulse a God incarnated under the form of a sword. An Arab tale, besides, seems to indicate that the Zingari were spread over other Asiatic states at a period prior to Tamerlane's conquests. It has been asked whether they were not forced to quit India owing to their depredations and cer-

tain misunderstandings with justice, and I am afraid that this supposition, less flattering for the self-esteem of the gipsies, is much more likely.

Amid this silence and gloom of history probably so called, the language of the gipsies may at any rate, perhaps, supply us with some slight light as to the probable date of their dispersion. An infiltration of Persian words is noticeable in the gipsy tongue, and the modern language of Persia, daughter of the old Zend, only entered India along with the new sectarians of Muhammad, the Arabs, Persians, and Affghans, who bore the word of the prophet on the point of their scimitars. This conquest was long and successive, and extended from Walid and Mahmud to the victories of Timour and Nadir. Hence it was during this period that the gipsies must have been separated, by some unknown event, from their original root. The language is, moreover, the only thing that enables us to track the gipsies on their passage from Asia into Europe. On the Indian and Persian bases of their idiom as now spoken in England, Germany, and Italy, a great quantity of Sclavonic, Greek, and Norman words have been grafted at a more recent period. The conclusion to be drawn from this admixture is, that the primitive and thoroughly oriental language of the gipsies picked up here and there some words of the regions it traversed, like the torrent assumes a tinge from the colour of the earth and roots it bears away with it.

Mr. Borrow does not doubt that the gipsies coming from Bulgaria halted in Roumania after crossing the Danube. Thence as from a hive a great number of travelling swarms spread over the different countries of Europe, and some, turning to the north-east, traversed Russia; others went west, extending their travels to Spain and England. In Wallachia and Moldavia a great number of Zingari are still met with; they are estimated at 200,000, and they are the relics of the great caravan, which left divers detachments behind it as it advanced westward. In 1417 they appeared in Germany, and in 1427 hordes of people calling themselves Bohemians showed themselves in France.

Their arrival was an event: they gave themselves out as coming from Lower Egypt; and according to their story, the Pope, after hearing their confession, condemned them to wander about for seven years to expiate their sins, without once sleeping in a bed. Seeing their state of denudation, and their ugly looks, it was thought advisable not to let them into Paris, and they were lodged by the order of the justice at La Chapelle Saint-Denis. Everybody flocked to see them: almost all had one or two silver rings in each ear, saying that "it was the mark of good birth in their country." The men were black, and had woolly hair: the women were even blacker than they, and their hair was as straight as a horse's tail.

Under the cloak of penitents, the self-called children of Egypt received permission, however, to wander about France, and it must be assumed that their penance was not meritorious, for many years succeeded the seven. They behaved, besides, as if theft and equivocal practices formed a part of the penance imposed on them by the Pope, whose blessing they declared they had received.

The date of the gipsies' arrival in England is not precisely known; everything announces, however, that they appeared in the British Isles more than three centuries back. The first historical episode of the English gipsies is the furious persecution to which they were exposed during the reign of Henry VIII. There are two decrees of that monarch in existence, in which the gipsies are described in the blackest colours: these edicts order the children of Egypt, as they were then called, to quit the kingdom and never return to it. One month was allowed for their expulsion; after that date they would be treated as robbers. Whoso dared to import any of these vagabonds into England, would be fined four pounds for each passenger. The penalties fulminated against the gipsies affected even those who might be seen in such bad company. Henry VIII.'s decrees were carried into effect: a great number of the apocryphal children of ancient Egypt were put aboard ship at the state expense, and carried back to France. The persecution was revived under

Mary Tudor and Elizabeth: the mere fact of being a gipsy was, at that time, punished with death. Gibbets were erected everywhere, and the flesh of these Western pariahs was mercilessly left to the crows.

A few years after the restoration of Charles the Second, thirteen gipsies were condemned at Norfolk assizes, and executed in conformity with the statutes. For the honour of England, this is the last occasion that these inhuman laws made victims, and the act of proscription itself was repealed by George the Third. The old measures, so rigorous in their nature, were evidently designed to extirpate the race, but they failed; after going to earth to some extent in order to escape death, the gipsies showed themselves again when the first and worst days of the storm had passed over.

It is interesting for the moral history of the Romany to know exactly the motives which determined this long and cruel persecution. They were accused of various crimes, among them being some evidently imaginary, and which arose from the superstitious notions of the age—as, for instance, their traffic with the demon. I should like to say the same of theft and the poisoning of cattle, for, at the first blush, we should feel disposed to place this last accusation among the ridiculous and atrocious falsehoods then invented by malevolence—such as the stories of children devoured by the Jews, and even by the gipsies.

Unfortunately, certain deeds practised in our day testify that this old opinion was not without foundation; for the English gipsies employ a term which expresses the art of giving cattle artificial diseases, *drabbing bawlor*. They act thus from various motives: the first, to be paid for curing the poisoned horses and cattle; the second, to get from the farmer the dead animals which are supposed to have died from natural causes; the third, to avenge a fancied insult. At all periods and in all countries this skill in preparing sundry very active poisons is noticeable among the gipsies.

There are grounds for believing that the gipsies, who landed in England about the beginning of the fourteenth century, soon spread over Scotland. The northern mountains, which protected the Gaelic races from the sword of invaders, could not raise an obstacle to the new nomadic hordes, for nothing can stop the progress of the gipsies: they are everywhere strangers, and everywhere at home. No historical document exists, however, in Scotland mentioning the Egyptians prior to the year 1540, when we find an order from the Privy Seal, given in the twenty-eighth year of the reign of James V., in favour of a certain Johnny Faw, or Faa, "Lord and Count of Little Egypt." This order was renewed by the Earl of Arran, Regent of Scotland, in 1553. It seems, from the tenor of these curious edicts, that this John Faa was a species of Abd-el-Kader, with

whom the Scotch government found it advisable to treat, in order to ensure the fidelity of the tribes under his influence. The magistrates were enjoined to support the authority of this Count of Egypt, lend him a hand in executing the laws of justice on his people, and punish as rebels those who might revolt against him. The next year, this same Faa, captain of the Egyptians, found guilty with twelve of his men of a murder committed at Lyntown, obtained his pardon and that of his accomplices.

From this extreme indulgence the Scotch passed, twenty-seven years later, to extreme severity. The number of gipsies, and also of their acts of brigandage, had greatly increased during the religious and political troubles that filled the reign of Mary Stuart; and in 1570 the authorities found it necessary to adopt the most rigorous measures in order to purge the country of the bands of vagabonds which infested it. An act of parliament established penalties for able-bodied beggars, while at the same time relieving those who were incapable of gaining their livelihood. I regret to find the bards, minstrels, and vagabond scholars confounded in this act with the jugglers of Egypt, whose society we may believe they cultivated. The statute was doubtless powerless to restrict the crimes and depredations of these bandits, for, in 1603, the lords of the council thought it right to issue a decree per-

petually banishing the whole breed, under the severest penalties. In 1609, an act of parliament declared that the subjects of his Majesty had the right to seize and put to death any Egyptian found in the country after a day fixed. This law met the fate of all violent laws: it directed pity to those whom it was intended to destroy. Not only the lower classes, but many persons of quality, continued, after the promulgation of the decree, to give shelter and protection to the persecuted gipsies. The government grew alarmed at this indulgence, and wishing to persist in its object, threatened the harbourers of the gipsies with severe penalties; but, in spite of all the efforts made to extirpate them in Scotland, the gipsies succeeded in anchoring themselves on this old mountainous land. Many, it is true, lost their lives in the struggle they had to maintain, and the severities of the law seem to have been preferentially directed against the descendants of that Johnny Faa who was once protected by the government; and a large number of that family were executed as Egyptians. It pains me to add, that in 1624 a certain Helen Faa, and other women, thirteen in number, were condemned to be drowned.

In England but few traces of the history of the gipsies can be found in local traditions: their existence was not taken into account. The records of the different counties, even of those in

which gipsies abound, and which are so rich in curious details, are generally silent on the annals of these extraordinary people. All that is known at the present day is, that the different tribes or families divided the country between them: each of these clans bore a different name, which has greatly exercised the ingenuity of the antiquaries. Among these names are some whose origin is most obscure; while others have been borrowed from the great English families. Although each separate group defined its own district, and does not suffer any other tribe to encroach, the love of a wandering life often induces them to exchange their territory.

After a certain period of hatred and distrust, the English peasants ended by growing gradually reconciled to the gipsies. If they did not find a very lively sympathy for a mode of life contrasting so strongly with the regular habits of the rural population, on the other hand these strangers had in Great Britain entire liberty to come and go, practical tolerance the result of religious divisions, and that rough generosity towards misfortune which is the striking trait in the English character. The conduct of the gipsies, I grant, continued in perpetual antagonism with the law, and, as some one must yield, it was generally the law that broke down. The gipsies enjoy, within certain limits, immunities which an old and powerful civilisation

finds it wise to grant these untamed children, whose habits there is no hope of changing. They are suffered to put up their tents where they please on commons, draw their carts whithersoever they like, and so long as they do not go beyond certain limits, their trifling plundering is overlooked.

Such is the history of the English gipsies; but we wish to know their present condition before all, and I was enabled to study this by sharing their nomadic life for a few days.

CHAPTER IX.

NEW FOREST SCENERY—MEETING A GIPSY CAMP—FORTUNE-TELLING —THE OLD GIPSY — MANNERS AND CUSTOMS — THE SUPPER — SLEEPING IN THE OPEN AIR—CHARACTER OF THE FEMALE GIPSY— ABSENCE OF ANY RELIGIOUS FEELING—GIPSIES ON THEIR TRAVELS —A HORSE RACE—A MARRIAGE—A FUNERAL—THE GIPSIES IN SCOTLAND—STORY OF SANDY BROWN—CHARLES GRAHAM—GIPSY DANCES IN SCOTLAND — MANNERS OF THE GIPSIES AMONG THE MOUNTAINS.

THE chief gipsy tribes now existing in England are the Stanleys, who are found in the New Forest; the Lovells, who like to come nearer London; the Coopers, who have selected Windsor Castle as their head-quarters; the Hernes who consider the northern counties, and before all Yorkshire, as their property; and lastly, the Smiths; who occupy East Anglia.

There are few regions more worthy the traveller's attention than that part of Hampshire known by the name of the New Forest. Here the finest air to be breathed in England is to be found, we are told. I traversed this district at the close of autumn, not for sanitary considerations, but in search of gipsies, and more particularly the Stanleys, whose acquaintance I wished to form. The

scenery of itself demanded a halt: commons and glades, in which the hand of man had, as yet, left no mark, surrounded from distance to distance rich pastures, gardens, and solitary houses built with exquisite taste. The desert, the woods, the riches of a soil cultivated and adorned by art, all formed a contrast agreeable to the eye, while at intervals stand the majestic remains of the royal forest. The most interesting portion is that extending between Beaulieu river and Southampton Water, where the water is really grand, and the banks of the bay and river both possess a character of serious beauty. In the midst of the imposing scenes which succeed charming prospects, I stopped to survey the trees, of which some are old, and offer a most peculiar appearance. The oaks do not rise to any great height, but their trunks are enormous, and their branches are picturesquely interlaced, so as to form those knees and elbows so sought by ship-builders.

Amid these scenes of nature I did not let out of sight the object of my search; but, in the place of gipsies, I found on the roads peasants who, though sunburnt, and to a certain extent savage, could not conscientiously pass for members of the Stanley family. Some of them drove a cart drawn by a rough-shaped pony with a long tail and mane, and slightly shaggy hide. Despairing of meeting gipsies in the roads or lanes, I walked over the commons, the deserted districts, and the frag-

ments of the old forest. There I discovered some herds of swine, each guided by a male porker, the chief or patriarch of the herd, who seemed conscious of his importance and the dignity of his duties. The present New Forest breed is descended from an old race of domestic pigs which was left to wander for generations in the forest, and has returned more or less to the original type of the boar. Its colour resembles that of the wild animals of the same family still met with in continental forests ; it is brown, and sometimes entirely black. Seen by the doubtful light of the glades, or in the shadow of the woods, these semi-boars are animals not without beauty : their slight form, their hard coat, possessing almost a metallic lustre, their mane standing up on their neck and shoulders,—all this looked pleasant among the trees in the beams of the setting sun. I then walked towards Christchurch, a village pleasantly situated in the angle formed by the confluence of the Avon and the Stour: I knew there was a church-tower there whence the view extends for a great distance, and I hoped to discover thence some tents or smoke which would tell me of the gipsies and their encampments.

I was following a hollow way between two heather-covered slopes, when I saw a boy of about fourteen, and, mounted on a donkey, coming towards me. Three things struck me: the elegant shape of the animal, the beauty of the lad,

and the poverty of the rags in which he was clothed. As we passed each other, the boy drew his donkey towards me, and asked for alms. Through his olive and bronzed hue, his black hair, his eyes of gloomy brilliancy, and his delicate features, I recognised him as a child of the race I sought. "Can you lead me," I asked him, "to your encampment?" At these words a cloud spread over the lad's naturally savage face, for gipsies from the earliest age are distrustful and excessively cautious. "I want," I added, "to have my fortune told by your mother." I will not assert that this explanation removed the boy's doubts, but he saw a chance of making money, and gipsies cannot resist such practical considerations.

We returned up the lane I had just walked down, and, after skirting a few hedges, I found myself in the middle of a wild and striking scene. A naked hill, though covered here and there with tawny heath, joined the most majestic relics of the old forest: aged oaks, whose shadows fell over the slopes of the hill, proudly displayed their gnarled limbs and their scanty but gloomy foliage. The sun was setting on the right, in the horizon of hills whose torn flanks preserved the traces of old torrents that had disappeared. Nothing is more strange than the sight of a gipsy camp amid this solitude and majesty of nature. Half a dozen tents were arranged in a semicircle,

and I noticed they were so arranged as to receive the beams of the rising sun: the men and women were seated on the ground round a fire, which, fed with green wood, produced more smoke than flame. The gipsies break off this wood, in spite of the laws, in the forest, or else from the vigorous hedges which border in Hampshire the deserted and sandy routes. No one was busied with anything: kettles hanging from a species of hook, under poles fixed in the ground, were singing the song of water beginning to boil. A few mangy dogs displayed their heads among the bushes, and began barking, though feebly, at the *Gorgio*. The gipsies kept up their indifferent and motionless attitudes: they are like the savages, who notice everything, while appearing to have seen nothing. Two little girls of five or six, lovely, and black as demons, alone left the party and came to ask alms of me.

The lad who had served as my guide got off his donkey, and, after making me a sign to keep beyond the limits of the camp, went to tell his mother. I saw presently a sorceress coming towards me who would have gladdened the heart of Rembrandt, Teniers, or David Wilkie. The gipsy race is probably the handsomest existing in the world: the women, especially when young, generally possess an admirable form and features not easily forgotten; but with age (and with them

it is precocious) this flower of beauty withers. The burning sun, the snow, the biting breath of the breeze to which they are constantly exposed —perhaps, too, the violent passions and practices of a dark life—all concur to efface at an early date that beam which nature allowed to fall on the face of the gipsies, as if consoling them for the rigours of a wretched existence. It is really astonishing that such lovely girls can make such ugly old women; and yet this very ugliness has a certain style about it: the face of the old gipsy women is at times repulsive and fantastic, but never vulgar.

I was curious to know whether the art of telling fortunes, as the gipsies practise it in all countries of the world, depended on a method, and I had more than one opportunity of convincing myself that no such thing existed. In the middle ages there was a science—chiromancy—which, chimerical and frivolous though it might be, at any rate was founded on rules. To believe the works of the chiromancers—and they are numerous —the human hand is a book in which Nature has written, with five leading lines forming a triangle, the character, and possibly the destiny, of each person. I do not doubt but that the first gipsies, on arriving in Europe, had knowledge of that doctrine, which was widely spread at the time. Some authors have even conjectured, and with

every appearance of probability, that the Egyptian origin attributed to the gipsies by themselves was a speculation on their part, as these adventurers had heard say that ancient Egypt was famous for the practice of the occult arts.

If they adopted at that period the formulas of chiromancy (which no one can positively assert), they are now forgotten. Instinct alone guides the gipsy women in the exercise of their trade, and it is at times, I am bound to confess, marvellous. Gifted with a sure and piercing glance, they pretend to be reading the hand while they are really perusing the heart. Their insinuating words become the echo of the most carefully hidden desires and thoughts. When I say that the gipsy fortune-tellers have no method, I mean that they have no agreed-on interpretation of the signs of the hand, nor have they any traditions handed down from one to the other. Intuitive physiologists, they have seen that human life is divided into three epochs, the first of which belongs to love, the second to ambition, the third to avarice. To the young they speak of affairs of the heart, to persons of a riper age they make a pompous recital of the honours that await them, and to the aged of both sexes they promise wealth. The gipsies are very careful not to confess their imposture: to hear them, they were an ancient, powerful, and rich race; but, if Heaven has stripped them of their purple and gold, it has

left them wisdom, the gift of second sight, and the art of reading the hand and the stars.

Some even give a curious explanation of this pretended faculty. Providence, having perceived from all eternity in the Romany an idle race but little fit for work, granted them the gift of prophecy, that they might earn their bread like other beings, if not in the same way, for all the world must live. This art of fortune-telling constitutes, in fact, a resource which in a pecuniary point of view is not to be despised. In the rural districts of England the sorceresses ask first and invariably sixpence; but, as the veil of the future is difficult to raise, they nearly always obtain something additional from the person whose curiosity they have succeeded in arousing. Maid-servants and farm-girls are their principal clients, but the circle of their customers is by no means restricted to the lower and more ignorant classes. I know at Gravesend an old gipsy woman, who is safe to be found at Rosherville Gardens during the summer, in the centre of that part of the gardens called the Maze, and she has held between her brown fingers more than one white and aristocratic hand.

It is unnecessary to repeat what the New Forest witch told me: foreigners are always warned of a voyage across the water (how could you leave Great Britain without crossing the sea?), and other events harmonising with their assumed intentions. She soon saw from my air of incre-

dulity that I had not come to have my fortune told, and, judging the moment favourable to make my proposal, I said:

"I have lost my way, and the sun is setting; I should like to pass the night by your fire."

A veil of gloomy suspicion spread over the sibyl's face.

"We have no accommodation," she said, "to offer you. The village is not far from here, and if you have lost your way, as you say, my boy will guide you for a few pence."

I went on: "While crossing Essex, I met, about ten days ago, a party of your brothers, the Lees, who were kind enough to receive me into their covered cart, and with them I went several miles through Epping Forest."

I added some details about my interview with the Essex gipsies of a nature to convince her that I was no stranger to the habits or manners of the race. The old woman's face assumed a crafty and malicious look:

"Have you come, perchance," she said, "to turn gipsy?"

"I have not got to that quite, yet. I know, too, that the Gorgies have nothing to do with the royal blood of the Pharaohs; but I am a traveller, I go here and there to obtain information, and I like to prowl about the country with those who know it."

"I see what you want," she said, in a hoarse

and emphatic voice; "I am not a witch for nothing. I was born in a thicket on that hill you see down there," (her raised hand pointed out an elevation which stood out in the decaying light of the sun), but my mother came direct from Egypt. You wish to see how we live?"

I confessed that I was curious to know the mode of life of an ancient race in which I took an interest: the old gipsy gave me a sign that she must consult the sages of the band, and returned within a few minutes.

"We are," she said, assuming an air of contrition not at all blending with the harsh character and almost supernatural ugliness of her features —"we are an unhappy race. We are driven from place to place; we have often been betrayed by those who said they wished us well; but, as you look a gentleman (all the gipsies have the serpent's flattering tongue), we will treat you as well as we can. We are not so wicked as we are called, and I trust you will find nothing to blame in our customs. We do what our fathers did: they wandered, and we wander. You, who are born in covered houses, consider this singular, but each in this world must follow the customs of his ancestors. We are all creatures of habit: the gipsies could not live between four walls as you do; they have not been accustomed to it from their infancy, and, besides, rents are so dear."

The band was composed of some thirty persons,

men, women, and children. The gipsies are not, as has been asserted, a sect of communists: each family has its tent, and each tent, like each person, is independent of the other.

Introduced into this venerable society of *Roms* and *Juwas*, I silently examined the form and external features of a race which has ever been a subject of amazement to me. The men were remarkable for their height, their well-proportioned limbs, and a natural air of distinction in their manners, contrasting with the usual awkward attitude of English boors. They smoked their pipes carelessly, while giving me at intervals a dark and furtive glance. The women generally had a low forehead furrowed with precocious wrinkles, pendant hair, which in colour and lustre reminded me of coals, and feet and hands of admirable smallness. Many of them had scars on their arms and face, the traces of their passage through the woods and briars. Perfect beauty is the exception among the Juwas as with other women: but, when met with, you recognise and admire a masterpiece of nature. A girl of thirteen or fourteen especially attracted my attention by the purity of her type. I noticed the olive of her complexion, the rich and pure blood of her race mantling on her cheeks, the slightly projecting but agreeably formed cheek-bones, and, above all, her large black eyes, whose orbits sparkled like twin stars. The idea struck me that one of

the ancestors of this girl had probably left her profile, the prototype of this beauty in rags, on the old bas-reliefs of the mysterious Indian temples.

The eyes of the gipsy girls have been compared by an English poet to those of a gazelle: they may have the blackness and wild character, but I affirm that they possess neither the softness nor the timidity. The work-girls of the poorer classes, especially the Irish, turn their faces away when looked at, but the Juwa would boldly endure in her rags the gaze of a king: she fears nothing, but makes herself feared. If she blushes, it is never from shame, but through anger. Some people have fancied that the mouth was the characteristic sign of the greater or less elevation of human races: that of the gipsies is of a peculiar and generally graceful shape. Their teeth, very white but long, contrast with the ruddiness of their lips and the deep hue of the face. It is difficult to form any idea of their taste in matters of dress, for they accept most generally, without choice, the clothes they can pick up or buy cheaply; they seem to have a preference, however, for showy colours. There is a gipsy costume generally consisting of a handkerchief tied under the chin, and a short red cloak: but it would be a mistake to suppose that wretchedness excludes coquetry in them. Most of the women and girls are fond of jewellery; they like wide lace, though black and torn, long earrings, rings

of dubious gold, and collars of false pearls. One of those I had before me, dressed in poor clothes, arranged, however, with a theatrical taste, showed me, not without pride, a ring of massive gold, surmounted by a half-sovereign to represent a precious stone; while the great luxury of the men is the possession of silver buttons.

On entering the gipsy circle, I was offered a seat—that is to say, a place on the grass: there was only one chair, and that was occupied by a Juwa at least one hundred years old, with a solemn and gloomy air. Three old men, Roms, whose heads the winters had whitened, were holding their thin hands to the fire, and at times thrusting back the half-extinct logs of wood. One of them was wrapped in a ragged blanket, and resembled the statue of Silence.

A man of about forty, remarkable through his costume, his round hat ornamented with a silver buckle, and his intelligent looks, gave orders for supper: he was the chief of the band. Some women at once rose with an ill-tempered look, for the hands of these creatures are not made for hard work. The gloomy flashing of their eyes, the contraction of their lips, the disorder of their hair, the roughness of their movements, and the facility with which they quarrel among themselves or with the children, all denote clearly their aversion from household duties. The old sorceress who introduced me, and who was doubtless instructed

to watch me, gave me a lamentable picture of the present condition of the gipsies. "Formerly," she said, "in the happy times of Old England, things went on very differently. We could put up our tents anywhere, and the earth did not refuse its fruits to the sober children of Egypt; but latterly the farmers have become so harsh! Woe to us if our horses or donkeys eat a handful of grass from a meadow. We have for supper this evening only a hedgehog which was found in the hedge-row, and it is very little for so many."

At these words, a chicken, hidden in one of the tents, protested, by a cry of alarm, against the old woman's falsehood: the sibyl's face assumed an air of irritation, and she uttered a curse at the bird in her language. "We have certainly a fowl," she continued, calling this time to her help animated gestures, "but we are keeping it for the marriage of one of our daughters." As it was evident that I was only admitted into the honourable circle of gipsies in the hope of getting something out of me, I placed a crown in the old woman's hand: the lad I met on the road pretended to run to a neighbouring farm, and returned with a black fowl in his arms, the same I had heard cluck, although the sun had set. The next point was to cook it; and the gipsies have a peculiar mode of doing that: a square piece of turf was removed, and a hole dug in the opening, which was filled with small wood. In the mean while,

the fowl's toilette had been made: this consisted simply in removing the entrails, and rolling it, feathers and all, in a paste of clay. This done, it was laid on the sticks, arranged so as to burn easily, and the piece of grass was placed over all as a lid. This mode has sundry advantages. In the first place, from a culinary point of view, it is excellent; and then it has the great merit in the eyes of the gipsies of concealing their dinner preparations.

The farmer from whom the fowl for which I paid had been stolen during the day, presently came running up in a great rage. He was received coldly and politely: he was allowed to inspect the camp, take a glance at the interior of the tents, and all were anxious to prove to him that his suspicions were unjust, though he had walked twice or thrice over the spot where his fowl was baking. The farmer had scarce departed ere the lid was removed, and the fowl taken out still wrapped in the clay, which was broken with a hammer; the feathers came off of themselves, and it was served up on a wooden dish. The chief of the tribe took from his pocket a formidable knife and divided the plunder impartially; next came the turn of the hedgehog, cooked precisely in the same way. This gipsy dish thus prepared is by no means to be despised: the skin and prickles of the steaming animal are removed by the mere act of breaking the clay.

Night had arrived, and men, women, and children prepared for bed. I was offered an old blanket, which I declined, contenting myself with the fire, which I agreed to keep up. It is true that the sibyl recommenced her grievances: wood had been so rare and dear during the last few years. Formerly the gipsies lopped the dead branches, and sometimes green wood, as they liked, but now-a-days the laws were frightfully severe; the forest itself was daily disappearing, encroached on as it was by the accursed houses. Had not the settled people room enough in the towns, that they should thus come to disturb the birds and the gipsies in their nests? The hedges were now guarded as if they were orange groves: there were no means for poor people like them to boil the water in the caldrons. What should they do on the morrow to warm themselves? I appeased the old woman's alarms by substantial reasons, and soon all were sleeping a heavy sleep around me.

It was a fine and sultry night for the English climate: and I caught myself, I am bound to confess, finding some charm in this open-air life. An owl hooted at intervals in the recesses of the forest, whose dense foliage formed a mass of shade on the star-studded transparency of the night. A few donkeys and an old horse were peaceably browsing the short grass of the hill-side; but the dogs, though lying down, were on the alert. The

moonbeams fell serenely on the round or pointed roof of the tents, whose clumsy canvas rattled at times in the light breeze. This repose, this silence, this appearance of the life of the old patriarchs by the flickering glare of a gipsy fire, all formed a new and singular spectacle for me, in this England so rich, so populous, and so blessed by the favour of civilisation.

I must allow that I saw here the existence of the Romany from its brightest side, for the nights are not always sultry and limpid. If anything be surprising in the life of this race which came originally from a hot country, it is the power with which these brown children of the sun have resisted all the vicissitudes of the most varying climate—rain, mist, and the sharp drizzle. At one moment under a roof, at another under a tree, at times even exposed without shelter to the rigours of the bad season, or interred for whole days beneath the snow, they enjoy a more robust and perfect health than those persons whose habits are regular. Neither damp, nor dryness, nor all the contrasts of temperature succeeding each other with such rapidity in England, can in any way affect the constitution of the gipsies. They certainly like the heat: I judge of this by the manner in which they crouch over the fire at the risk of burning themselves; but, when travelling, they endure the most intense cold with bare heads, and no other defence than old rags carelessly

draped round them. They brave everything, put up with everything, and sleep equally well in wet weather or dry. I still had occasion for observing that they generally have, to a certain extent, a feeling for home: the gipsies are regarded as people without an asylum, but this is a mistake. The birds of the air have their nest, the foxes their holes; the gipsies have their tent or their cart, a species of perambulating house, where they are at home. They very rarely allow strangers access to their tents; on this night, all the canvas doors of the tents round me were carefully lowered, although wide open during the day.

A fine night was succeeded, as is so frequently the case in England, by a gloomy and misty morning. The camp was almost abandoned at an early hour, save by the aged: the children going to collect wood, while the occupations of the men are various. Most of them, however, are tinkers, and their cry is well known in English villages: *Old pots and kettles to mend!* Any one who carefully examines the spots where gipsies have bivouacked, will be sure to find pieces of tin and other metals. As they carry on the trade of tinkers all over the world, there is reason for asking whether, at the origin of society, the various trades were not attributed to different races? There are gipsies who mend chairs, sharpen knives, and make baskets of withies they cut along the road, and which they dye of various

colours, but, in spite of these minor trades, the men, old or young, only work to save themselves from the reproach of doing nothing at all. Like the savages, they leave the care of supporting the family to their wives.

That strange creature, the gipsy woman, often earns in one day more than her husband does in a week. She goes from house to house with baskets on her arms, or wooden articles carved with a knife: but this trade is only a pretext. Her object is to get in: her profession is to tell fortunes, sell love-charms, conjurations, and specifics for all diseases. She speaks English fluently, and among the daughters of Eve there are few who resist her deceiving words. In fine, she is much more intelligent than her husband; but she makes, in too many instances, a deplorable use of her faculties: she is accused of separating wives from their husbands, and corrupting young girls, when it is made worth her while to do so. The complicity of these pretended sorceresses in certain criminal causes, is unhappily too well established. A few years ago, two married English women fell in love with the same man, and they several times gave sums of money to a gipsy woman in order to get from her philters and enchantments. I do not know whether it was this charm or any other that acted, but they succeeded in captivating the common object of their affections.

The husbands had scarce learned of this intrigue, ere they were both poisoned by their wives.

I have said the harm: now let me mention the good. The gipsies are in certain cases a criminal race, but they are not vicious: the men are not drunkards, or the women licentious. By a singular contrast (and the character of the gipsies abounds in contrasts), the same creature who readily serves as a go-between, who forms and favours the most culpable intrigues, who mutters tempting words in the maiden's ear, is herself exempt from those weaknesses she encourages in others for the sake of gain. She corrupts without being corrupted; she seduces, but takes care not to let herself be seduced. Those who only look at appearances will be tempted to smile when I speak of gipsies' honour; but although the women readily indulge in licentious dances and improper language, they stop there. Differing from the hypocrites of whom the Gospels speak, they care little about the outside of the cup being soiled, provided that the bottom is of pure gold. The birth of an illegitimate child is a rare event among the gipsies.

This conjugal fidelity everywhere distinguishes the Roms and Juwas from the other peoples of the earth, from the most civilised down to the most savage. Though naturally jealous, a gipsy will not feel alarmed at seeing a Christian court his wife, provided that he is rich, or in a position to

serve him, for he knows perfectly well who is being deceived.

It is before all in this singular race that we can study the distinction between purely material chastity and virtue: the Juwas are chaste, but they are not virtuous. Resistance with them is only a limit, but then it is impassable. I had pointed out the half-sovereign ring worn by one of the women of the band: this Juwa, still young and passably pretty, had encouraged the advances of a farmer's lad. The poor fellow, having his head turned, had employed his savings to purchase this toy, which was offered as a pledge of love and accepted, for the gipsies never refuse anything. Emboldened by his success, the young man awaited the Juwa on a desolate road at the moment she was returning from fortune-telling, and familiarly passed his arm round her waist. Any one who has seen a bird of prey rising from the ground at the approach of a party of schoolboys, can form an idea of the Juwa leaping over a hedge, while overwhelming the Gorgio with reproaches. She confided everything to her husband, who laughed as he repeated the story.

The chastity of the gipsy woman has two ramparts: love and hatred. Her hatred is for the white race: her love (and she can love), for the men of her own tribe. A girl of thirteen, asked one day if she would marry a gentleman, put on an air of disgust, and shook her head.

"But supposing," the speaker laughingly added, "no one was left in the world but you and a Gorgio of your own age?"

"I would marry him," she replied, "but I should detest him."

The gipsy woman is also an excellent mother: she is generally delivered, as she herself was born, on a heath, at the foot of a tree, or behind a clump of nut-trees. I saw one of these wretched creatures who had just been confined, in a large tent covered with rags, and raised in the centre of one of the North Woolwich commons. Ten children of different ages, of whom seven belonged to her and three to her sister, were warming themselves at a coal fire burning in the middle of the tent, which had a smoke-hole at the top of the roof. The mother, her pallor heightened by her black hair, retained some traces of beauty: she was lying on straw, with her new-born babe by her side, for cradles are never found among the gipsies. It was sad and affecting to see, amid all this misery, the faded face of the mother lit up by a gleam of pride when she gave her child the breast.

The gipsy women are proud of their descent: for noble black blood, the blood of old Egypt, flows in their veins. The child is baptised a few weeks after birth, receiving two names: one by which he is known to the Gorgies, the other to his brothers. As among the savage tribes, love of their children is a distinctive feature of the Romany people; but

it is a love that knows no pity for the frail constitution of the infant. The mother carries her three months' old child on her back in an old shawl or piece of blanket, and wanders about with it through the rain, hail, and snow. At times, however, she will fasten it to her side and cover it with her cloak, like a bird protecting its young beneath its wing. When the child has reached the age of three years, its fate is even harder, for it must follow its parents afoot, exposed to all the rigours of a tempestuous sky. As it has vagabond blood in its veins, it readily accepts this life of privations and adventures: active, jovial, and bold, it protests by its good looks and the flash of its black eyes against the pity a visitor might be disposed to grant it. The mothers watch with peculiar solicitude over the conduct of their daughters. An English clergyman wished to engage as servant, a few years ago, the daughter of a gipsy who was anxious to give up a wandering life: but the mother refused for a considerable time. Urged to explain the motives of her resistance, she confessed she was alarmed at the danger a young girl's virtue would incur in a town, far from the eyes of her mother. The clergyman promised to watch over the girl, and the gipsy at last entrusted her to his care.

I left the camp of the Stanleys, to which I returned, however, the next day. It was Sunday; and the careless attitude of the gipsies contrasted

with the air of religious solemnity that prevailed on that day in the villages. This indifference is general, and extends over the whole race. In Turkey, the Romany regard the mosques and crescents with the same stoicism they display elsewhere for the crosses and Catholic or Reformed Churches. Like Rousseau, they apparently belong to the religion of the country where they are, but do not sympathise with any one. In Russia, the Gitanas profess externally the Greek faith, and wear crosses of copper or gold; but when Mr. Borrow questioned them on this delicate point in their own language, they replied, that it was to please the Russians. In England, the gipsies have their children baptised, but it is to them rather a mode of identification than a religious practice, and it is very rarely that they attend church. It would be wrong to suppose that this resistance, which is perfectly passive, results in them, as in the Jews, from the recollections of an ancient national faith, for no trace is found among the gipsies of their primitive religion, no idea of their gods, if they ever had any. Coming from India, they may have been followers of Buddha or Brahma, but these phantoms of divinity are effaced from their memory. Some dogmas—as, for instance, that of metempsychosis—appear at times to stray over their imagination, but only like the shadow of an annihilated past. Their religion, like their history, is a mystery. This absence of

God renders even more extraordinary the perpetuation of this race, which has resisted time, climates, and the force of example. If the existence of the Jews, united and protected by a dogma, rules, ceremonies, and a sacred book, is a miracle in the eyes of certain believers, the existence of the gipsies must be a prodigy.

They have no belief, and yet they possess a legislature. The old sibyl, with whom I had by this time formed a better acquaintance, said, on seeing me again, "You come too late to study our manners, for we are no longer the people we were. The Roms have been too much mingled with the Gorgies, and have become like them, and worse than they are. We are no longer united; we are no longer ready to assist one another in every place and at all seasons. The interests of individuals are now distinct; the rich man despises the poor. Our sons are not worth us, and their sons, again, will be less worth than they. I tell you, the law of the gipsies has ceased to exist." What is that law? It consists of three articles. The first enjoins on the gipsy to live with his brethren, to reside under a tent like a traveller, and not in a house rooted in the ground; and to observe, in a word, the manners of his ancestors. The second is chiefly addressed to the women: it prescribes to them an absolute fidelity to their husbands. The third refers to the payment of debts. Formerly, the gipsy who could not pay his brother the money he

had borrowed, became the slave of the creditor for a year and a day; he hewed his wood and drew his water. Even at the present day it is a point of honour among them to pay their debts, and the luckless debtor makes the greatest sacrifices to free himself from a situation which he regards as degrading. This suffices to show that if the gipsies have no religion, they have at least a moral code: the notion of good and evil may be perverted among them, but it is not extinct. Their conscience is moulded on precepts, and they feel no remorse for acts not forbidden by their law. They steal the property of others—of the Gorgies especially—unscrupulously; but the women behave well to their husbands, and the men faithfully repay the money they may have borrowed. As an English poet has asked, who are more faultless, they or we?

As the band of the Stanleys was going to start on the morrow for some races, I promised to come and see their departure at an early hour. There is no sight more curious than this removal of a caravan, which carries the mind back to desert scenes or the primitive ages of history. I was especially struck by their attention to the old and the weak: the aged woman, who alone enjoyed the privilege of a chair in camp, was placed with all possible tenderness on a donkey. For sixty years she had not slept in a bed, and she was known to all the farmers around, who readily gave

her straw and food. As she was blind (I did not notice this at first), a lad undertook to lead the donkey and watch over the mother, as he called her. The procession set out: a light cart conveyed the baggage and the tents; young and old, women and children, followed pell-mell, staining their lips with the blackberries, and their hands with the nuts, they plucked from the trees. A few girls culled from the hedges daisies and other flowers, and these natural ornaments were used to tie up their hair, and better suited their bronzed foreheads than the richest head-dress of pearls. The gipsies are the first travellers in the world. They have a natural calendar, with all sorts of prognostics as to good weather or bad, derived from the flight of certain birds, the direction of the clouds, and the colour of the water in the streams. You find among them, as with the savages, a prodigiously developed memory of places; they know who inhabits every house. On reaching a village, the women are at once aware what knocker they may rap, and as they live upon the public credulity, this knowledge of families, characters, and local habits, is of great assistance to them in drawing the horoscope of the person who desires to open the book of fate. Some English farmers, too, have decided on living on good terms with these marauders, opening to them their barns, letting them shake a few fruit-trees, or giving them a corner on which to camp. They said to themselves

that the gipsies were like the crows—the less liberty is granted them the more they take; if you allow them, like the birds of prey, only a shelter among your rocks or on your waste lands, they will avenge themselves on your flocks. All the farmers, I am bound to say, do not agree in this, or understand their own interests.

As we passed near Southampton, the gipsies pointed out, at the branching of two roads, a piece of common on which some other families of the Stanleys were erecting their tents. "That field," they told me, "was bought by one of their rich brethren" (a rich gipsy is a rarity, but among the poor a man may be rich cheaply), "who, seeing that his race was now everywhere expelled, and that the children of Ishmael had no place where to lay their heads, granted them one in this piece of ground." All the travelling hordes can now find a shelter there for a few days, for the English gipsies rarely remain more than two or three days at the same spot. This act of generosity did not surprise me, for I knew more than one instance of this blood-love, as they call it. Another affecting trait is the care these wandering tribes take not to lose each other in their travels. When we reached the remains of the old forest, which seemed to extend a long distance, one of the women pointed out to me on one of the cross-roads three or four sods of grass, thrown down at a small distance from each other. "Our brothers," she said to me, "have followed

that road." These lumps of grass, as well as a cross formed on the ground, enable the different families of the tribe to find each other during their migrations.

All the gipsies like to visit fairs, markets, and races, for they find there more than one opportunity to carry on their divers trades. Sometimes they swap away a donkey or an old pony, for they are all horsecopers by birth: their skill in metamorphosing draught animals, and selling as new, often to the original proprietor, an old broken-down horse, whose colour and skin have been altered, is well known about the country. Craft is a faculty independent of the intellectual development of races, and the gipsies, though uneducated and ignorant, are very great adepts in the art of cheating.

There were at the races several bands of Stanleys who had given each other the meeting there, and I noticed among them a young woman with a bold and enterprising face and masculine form, mounted on a black horse, with a round hat on her head, a silver-mounted whip in her hand, and a handsome riding-dress, which she wore with a certain Amazonian grace. All the gipsy women are mad for horses, whips, and display: it is curious to see how easily they transform themselves from sorceresses into jockeys. This was the heroine of the festival; but her triumph was of short duration. It seemed that, in one of the mid-

land counties, whence she had found it prudent to bolt at full speed, she had played a trick very common among the gipsies of all countries. Two old maids lived in a state of retirement in a country-house; the gipsy had found means to introduce herself to them, and persuade them that, if they consented to deposit a certain sum of money in the cellar, it would increase ten per cent. by virtue of her conjurations. We can guess that the sorceress pocketed the sum, and nothing equalled the pride she felt at this success, except the resentment of the greedy and credulous old maids on finding themselves duped by so clumsy a trick. The adventure at length reached the ears of the police, and the fair Amazon was arrested. The other gipsies, though they had donned their holiday clothes for the occasion, contrasted by their poverty-stricken air with the extravagant pomp of this sister, whose misfortunes they had presently to deplore; but, notwithstanding their miserable appearance, they laid out for amusements considerable sums. The Roms and Juwas have the same improvidence as the savages, and dissipate their money even more readily, because it costs them less to gain: it is not the fruit of what may be called labour, but of artifice. And then the gipsy girl says to herself, that so long as there are marriageable girls or married women to carry on an intrigue (the heart that

loves is superstitious), she will never lack shillings or sixpences to cross her hand.

When the races were over, I returned to the Stanleys, who had allowed me to join their camp, and whom I had partly lost out of sight, the men being busy in selling their donkeys, the women in telling fortunes. As they were preparing to start for Lymington, we parted on tolerably friendly terms, and they even invited me to be present at the marriage of one of their daughters—that one for whom the black chicken had been reserved—although the marriage was not to come off for six months. The gipsies are poor, but prodigal, and this prodigality is especially displayed in their festivals, the chief of which is the marriage of their daughters. This marriage is always preceded two years by the ceremony of betrothal, and during that period they live like brother and sister. When the wedding-day arrives, the great day (for what has been written about the broken pitcher does not exist among the gipsies), the union is irrevocable, and only death can dissolve it; the poorest make incredible sacrifices to provide a grand marriage feast, which lasts three days, during which the tent of the Romany is open to everybody. The girl to whose wedding I was invited might be seventeen years of age; she had been betrothed for the last eighteen months to a young man of twenty, her cousin. In inviting me, the gipsies added, that the cere-

mony would take place in a church, for the Romany, while having no religious belief, like to show that they are admitted like other people to the blessings and ceremonies of the Reformed Church.

The Stanleys also told me that, if I was curious to learn their customs, I ought to witness the burial of one of their sisters, which was to take place in a few days at Woodford, in Essex. The gipsies, those eternal wanderers who only rest in the tomb, display considerable anxiety about their last abode: though they may not trouble themselves excessively as to the future state of their souls, a proper coffin and a nook in some quiet country churchyard are the objects of their last thoughts. Their last resting-place interests them to such a degree, that one of them in dying expressed a desire to be buried at a particular spot about a hundred miles from that where he closed his eyes, and the other gipsies, scrupulous executors of the dead man's will, transported his body thither. This solicitude is easily understood on the part of men who have no other country than the tomb. When a Rom has heaved his last sigh, his relatives at once burn his clothes with the straw of his bed; but they religiously preserve his rugs, his snuff-box, any old silver spoon, his horse or his donkey, and they never part with these objects save in moments of great distress. Even in such cases they do not sell them, but pledge them with

one of their brethren, redeeming them when they possess the means. Several families visit the tombs of their relatives once a year, generally towards Christmas; and the children never speak of their dead ancestors without a feeling of regret and affection.

The woman to be buried, and whose funeral I attentively observed, belonged to the Lee family, and she was known in the neighbourhood by the name of the Queen of the Gipsies. She had reached the age of one hundred and three. Hundreds of spectators collected round the grave. The body had been laid out in a tent in the middle of Epping Forest, about three-quarters of a mile from the church, and was brought to the grave in a one-horse hearse, followed by seven gipsies in deep mourning. The Queen of the Gipsies had been supported during life by the charity of several Woodford ladies, but, as her infirmities increased with age, it was thought better to place her in West Ham Union, where she had died a fortnight previously. The expenses of the funeral, however, were paid by her family. As I left the churchyard in which this wandering destiny had ended, I read on an old mossy stone these words, which struck me: "Life is but a journey."

I will say nothing about the other four great gipsy families—the Lovells, Coopers, Hernes, and Smiths, whose manners only slightly differ from those of the Stanleys. During the summer these

tribes seek the vicinity of parks and pleasure-gardens, where a great number of promenaders assemble, especially on a Sunday. In winter, the Lovells prefer the most populous quarters of London. I saw several of them wandering about the streets of Wapping, where many young girls live more or less affianced to sailors: they wish to know if their lover will soon return to them, if he has forgotten them in distant lands, and if the seas he sails over are quiet or stormy. To find a new phase of gipsy life in Great Britain, we must, however, proceed to Scotland, for in that country, amid austere scenery, the character of the Romany has assumed grander proportions and more romantic forms. The gipsies do not appear to have ever been so numerous there as in England. Many of the primitive tribes no longer exist: their chiefs have been struck down by the law, and the members of their families have been dispersed, or have attached themselves to other tribes. The annals of this wandering people—I do not allude to ancient times, but to the beginning of this century—are written in sanguinary characters on the rocks and old trees of the Caledonian forests. I will select as the stage of these chronicles and adventures the county of Fife, one of the richest in curious ruins, shaggy scenery, and picturesque landscapes.

About fifty years back, a traveller of that county found himself, on a winter's day, before a forge in the neighbourhood of Carlisle. He was

having his horse's shoes looked to, when another traveller stopped for the same purpose. The horse of the latter was of a good English breed, elegantly saddled and bridled, and the rider was richly dressed, booted and spurred, and held in his hand a very pretty whip. As there were several horses to be shod, the new comer wished to be attended to at once, and his assurance attracted the attention of the Scotch traveller, who examined the stranger from head to foot. What was his surprise on recognising in the false gentleman a certain Sandy Brown, who traversed the country at the head of a band of gipsies, and whom he had often seen come to his father's house! On reaching the spot where he was known, the brilliant rider doffed his fine clothes, sold his horse, put on again his leathern apron and torn clothes, resumed his trade of tinker, and rejoined his tribe. The facility with which the gipsies put on and off various masks is one of the characteristics of the race.

This Sandy Brown, with his brother-in-law, Wilson, carried on a considerable, though illegal, trade in horses between Scotland and England. In Fife, many adventures are still told, doing honour to the skill, if not to the morality, of Sandy Brown. One day he noticed in a field a young bull, which, by some accident, had lost three-fourths of its tail. Brown bought of a tanner a skin of the same colour as the bull's, and with

great ingenuity manufactured a false tail, which he fastened to that of the living animal. Having thus disguised his booty, he carried it off, and was just placing it in a boat at Queensferry, when a servant came up, sent by his master in pursuit of the robber. A discussion commenced between him and the gipsy. "I could take my oath," the man said, "that, were it not for the long tail, I should recognise that animal as belonging to us;" and he was preparing to make a more minute investigation, when the gipsy drew a knife from his pocket, and, in the sight of all present, cut off the false tail, while careful to remove a slice of the real stump, which bled copiously. With a superb gesture of calumniated innocence he threw the false tail into the sea, and solemnly addressed his accuser: "Swear now, if you wish to be eternally condemned!" The servant withdrew in confusion, and the gipsy went on his road with his spoil.

At last Sandy Brown was captured by a party of Highlanders in Rannoch Wood, and he is still spoken of in Scotland as one of the tallest and finest men ever seen. "His countenance," I read, "was imposing and agreeable." Like the brigands of romances, he boasted that he had never taken the value of a sixpence from the poor. He was hanged at Edinburgh, with his brother-in-law, Wilson, and while the hangman was at work, his mother, Martha, was seized on the very place of execution in the act of stealing a pair of sheets. It was

afterwards discovered that the sheets were wanted to bury her two sons, who were dying at that moment in her presence.

The gibbet is, with some Scotch gipsy families, especially the Browns, a family tradition, which shows the tenacity of certain habits in this race. Ann Brown, one of the female chiefs of the band Sandy rendered famous, was condemned to fourteen years' transportation; she passed seven years in Aberdeen prison, remained nine years at Botany Bay, married a gipsy in that colony, returned to England with more than one hundred pounds, and set up as a crockery dealer at Wemyss. When asked why she left Botany Bay, where she earned so much money, she replied: "I thought it my duty to show them that I could return." Her son, Charlie Graham, about whom many curious tales are told, was also hanged at Perth; his sister, Jenny Graham, was the mistress of a gentleman, but, although receiving a fine allowance, her attachment to a wandering life was so invincible, that she left her protector, sacrificed wealth, and joined the relics of the band. She was remarkably beautiful, and people still live who can remember her going about in a handsome riding-dress mounted on an elegantly saddled donkey.

At the present day, the gipsies of North Britain have abandoned that life of brigandage which cost their ancestors so dear; still they have re-

tained there, better than in England, certain customs of their race. I heard in Fifeshire about an old Jamie Robinson, who was a musician eagerly sought for at fairs and village weddings. His wife, sisters, and daughters indulged at times in dances of a strange and extravagant character: it was an extraordinary sight to see these bacchantes, with their light feet, flying hair, and disordered garments, bounding with wild vigour on the grass, while old Jamie, black as the demon, regulated the movements of the dance, and animated the witches by his music. The gestures in these dances were sometimes licentious, but this did not prevent the dancers from being chaste.

The Romany now traverse Scotland in small bands, which annually reappear at the same spots and the same period. The men mend pots, sell clumsy earthenware, deal in rags, eggs, salt, and tobacco, carve horn spoons, and are generally thieves on a small scale: they seem to make it a point of honour, however, not to steal anything from the place where they are welcomed. In the midst of the fine Scotch lakes and rivers, they shoot and fish with considerable address. It is difficult to make them comprehend that the beasts of creation do not belong to everybody, and these poachers, in their destructiveness, know no limits of season or property. When they are travelling, the Scotch gipsies usually sleep in sheds and barns, regulating the length of their stay

by the generosity and toleration of the farmers: when they cannot reach an hospitable roof, they remove the covering from their cart, and crowd beneath it, men, women, and children, like a covey of partridges under the snow.

In some Highland counties where the temperature is very severe, they take up their winter quarters at the foot of a mountain, and collect in huts covered with stubble. They decamp from these huts in May, when the young salmon leave the inland streams for the bitter waters of Ocean. Some of these bands bear with them patriarchal riches: a certain number of sheep, and as many as a dozen donkeys. The general character of the Scotch scenery harmonises marvellously with the wild character of the gipsies. I never shall forget the impression produced on me by a band of gipsies seated in the middle of a naked plain on the stones of an old Celtic cromlech: it was the mystery of a living race side by side with that of a dead race.

The gipsies are, then, a half savage race, hitherto grafted on civilisation by its evil propensities. Is the moral degradation of this race, so handsome and strong in other respects, irremediable? This is still left for us to examine.

CHAPTER X.

ARE THE GIPSIES INCORRIGIBLE?—DECADENCE OF THE SECT—INSTITUTION FOUNDED TO RESTORE GIPSIES TO SOCIETY—RUDIMENTS OF A REFORM—ZIZILLA—THE ZIGANA SINGER AND MADAME CATALANI—THE BIBLE TRANSLATED INTO ROMANY—WAS JOHN BUNYAN A GIPSY?—EPISODE OF A GIPSY SOLDIER IN SPAIN—THE INTEREST OF HUMANITY THAT ALL NATIONS SHOULD FRATERNISE.

A POPULATION living on the toil of others is certainly a serious burden for a state; in accord with morality, then, political economy advises the trial of regenerating the gipsies. Some English philosophers have compared this race to a hawk's egg, on which the most lovely bird of paradise would in vain sit; but the moralist cannot acquiesce in such ideas, or condemn a human family whose vices and evil inclinations are, partly at least, the work of circumstances. Children born under tents have drunk for centuries the milk of ignorance, the mother of all crimes. The nomadic life led by the gipsies not being in any way favourable to the development of even the most elementary knowledge, we may expect to find among them but very little acquired light, and those who can read and write form the exception. One of

the most repulsive traits among them is, without contradiction, their propensity for thieving; but we must not be too eager in ascribing this disposition to the influences of race. Theft, which some philosophers have regarded as the bitter fruit of the social condition and the division of property, is, on the contrary, a continuation of that pillage which among all savage races constitutes a species of natural law.

It must be observed, that among the causes of decadence—for gipsyism is undoubtedly in a state of decline—persecution can no longer be taken into account. So long as severe laws and measures of proscription were maintained in Great Britain, the black and vagabond people of solitude adhered unchangeably to their traditions. The gipsies then fought against a society that menaced them; they retired to the mountains and forests, bearing with them, not the bones, but the customs and wandering temper of their ancestors. They lived on persecution, but toleration kills them; the civil law, by growing gentler, has in great measure dethroned the old law of the gipsies. The true causes which may be assigned in addition for this decadence are, the progress of agriculture, which leaves no land barren in England on which the gipsies can erect their tents; the development of the enclosure system; and, before all, the relations between the Roms and Juwas with the Gentiles. It has been noticed, for instance,

that in those districts where the gipsies are kindly treated by the rural population they have gradually assumed the national form of the English character. The natural order of things, therefore, paves the way for a reform for which the modern spirit of society, especially the tolerant spirit of the English laws, has already done more than the gibbet and torture.

About 1832, a society was formed at Southampton to ameliorate the condition of the gipsies, a people too long neglected. The soul of the society was the Rev. George Crabb, who called himself the gipsies' lawyer. He proposed, before all, to modify the nomadic habits of the race. "Various circumstances," he said, "have led me to believe that if this reform were slightly encouraged, the gipsies would consent to live in towns and villages like other people, and at the end of a generation or two they would become civilised." The facts on which Mr. Crabb based his hopes are of a nature to show that, even in the present state of things, and without any foreign intervention, the gipsies are not incorrigible vagabonds.

A man of thirty, already burdened with a numerous family, having perceived that the system of enclosure made daily progress in the neighbourhood of Cambridge, and that the farmers were growing less and less inclined to let him camp on their fields, rented, in 1810, a small house with a garden in the suburbs of the town, in which he

lived in winter, travelling during the summer. One of his occupations was playing the fiddle at farms and private houses at Christmas-time. This is not the only instance of a gipsy renouncing, at least partially, the life of a Wandering Jew. In Scotland, a family connected to a band of tinkers had a pleasant house near Ayr; and only a few years back the ruins of villages were pointed out near Stevenston inhabited by gipsies during the last century.

I saw myself, at Wells, in Norfolk, a gipsy girl of fifteen to sixteen married to the chief of a band, who lived during the bad season in a cottage by the sea, of which she paid the rent punctually—a shilling a week. Her name was Zizilla: she told fortunes and danced in the streets. It would be difficult to find a more perfect type of the Oriental character and beauty of the Juwas: her gestures, the exaggerated expression of her features when they expressed feelings of jealousy, vengeance, or anger, showed that she truly belonged to the race. She seemed deeply attached to a young English girl of the same age as herself. The latter having fallen dangerously ill, Zizilla went one night to her house. Standing by the bedside, with dishevelled hair, one hand on the sick girl's heart, the other raised to heaven, she muttered in her mysterious language some form of conjuration. I did not believe in the virtue of her magical words, and probably she did not do so herself, but her

inspired air, her eyes fixed and animated by a strange fire, produced a most interesting scene. Her husband, whom Zizilla called the great ruler of the night, formed an exception to the ordinary gipsies by his acquirements: he came to see her every now and then, for he still prowled about with his band. The young English girl, who was romantic without reading romances, confessed, at a later date, that she was attracted to the gipsy by his quaint garb, face, and manners. Zizilla was aware of it, but she cared little for a rival with light hair and blue eyes, in whose veins ran the pale blood of the savages, according to gipsy notions. Though she lived under a roof, she kept up the habits of the tent. Of three rooms her cottage contained she only inhabited one, and frequently complained of the want of light and air. In winter she remained tolerably quiet, but, so soon as spring came, she spoke enthusiastically of the glorious life spent in the woods, and the pleasure found in seeing the stars sparkling through the canvas of the tent, and the wild fires dancing on the heath. Spring is the critical season: it acts on the vagabond blood of the settled gipsies as it does on birds in a cage. Zizilla would then go off and join the band, which she left again at the end of autumn. One day, however, she started never to return.

The society founded by the Rev. G. Crabb obtained some success, mingled with numerous

disappointments. Sixteen reformed gipsies were living, in 1832, at Southampton: they had renounced vagabondage, and carried on various trades, while three other families asked leave to take up their winter quarters under the wing of the institution. The children went to school, and even the adults learned to read. This work did good; but those who know, from the study of history, with what slowness and through what a series of events the nomadic races become settled, will not feel surprised that this partial attempt has exercised no influence over the general condition of the English gipsies. To attach these floating beings to the domestic roof is incontestably the object the moralist must propose to himself: in the present state of things the gipsies bear, unconsciously, the punishment of their resistance to the laws of social life, before all the first of them—a fixed domicile. This race is unhappy: I more than once surprised on the scarred faces of the Roms and Juwas, under their frowning brows, an expression of vacuity and melancholy common to all more or less savage tribes that live beneath tents. Their very joy is sad and forced.

The gipsy race is an artistic one, which can be hardly credited when we regard its ignorance and state of misery; the women, more especially, display a peculiar taste for music and dancing. They possess in their language old songs which have the savage perfume of the heath, and which

have passed for centuries from mouth to mouth, like a distant echo of the unknown country. The effect of these songs at night among the ruins of old Scotland is marvellous; at Constantinople, you often see in the coffee-houses gipsy women performing lascivious dances not without character though, to the sound of various musical instruments. In Hungary, where this wandering people is at even a lower stage than in other states of the civilised world, the Zigani play the fiddle with remarkable talent: parties of these bronzed people have appeared with success in the European capitals; but it is before all in Russia that this musical faculty of the race produces the richest and most delicate fruit. At Moscow, gipsy women give concerts on the stage and in the drawing-rooms of the nobility, and vocalists of the first class have in that country emerged from this generally despised race. Mr. Borrow has collected curious instances of this musical aptitude of the Romany, and the facts he quotes I have heard confirmed by Englishmen who have travelled in Russia.

Madame Catalani was so enchanted at Moscow by the talent of a gipsy *cantatrice*, who had recited before a large and brilliant audience one of the national airs of this accursed people, that she took from her shoulders a Cashmere shawl the Pope had presented to her, and, kissing the gipsy, said to her: "This shawl is yours; it was

intended for the finest singer in the world. I now perceive that the singer is not myself."

The engagements obtained by several of these gipsy women enable them richly to support their families. Some dwell in fine houses, go about in elegant carriages, and are not inferior in intellectual development or polished manners to the most distinguished classes. Some of them have even married Russians; the Countess of Tolstoy, one of the most accomplished Russian ladies, was a Zigana by birth, and she sang at Moscow in a chorus of Romany. In the face of these facts there is reason for asking whether the gift of music, properly cultivated, might not be in England, as in Russia, a means for the moral regeneration of a certain number of gipsies.

Music and dancing are indubitably those arts in which gipsies take most interest; but they have also a literature. We must not confound, as has been frequently done, the dialect of the Romany with the slang of thieves: for the latter is a jargon, while the Romany is a language. Its birth is illustrious: daughter of the Sanscrit and the Zend, it has preserved traces of its noble origin. It was long supposed that this language could not be written, but that is a mistake: during his stay in Spain, in 1838, Mr. Borrow translated the Bible into Romany. This was the first time a book had been printed in that idiom. The Gitanos of the Peninsula greeted with extreme

joy this attempt to raise up a tree with old and venerable roots, which had been neglected and allowed to trail on the ground. I am bound to confess that there was no religious feeling mixed up in this; they only saw in the translated Bible the triumph of their national language.

Most gipsies complain, in fact, throughout the world, of the decadence of their idiom; for they know instinctively that, where languages decline, races are going to ruin. The Romany did not possess till that period written documents, but they had everywhere songs or ballads. This literature is a character-painting, though we must not expect from a race condemned too frequently to express merely physical feelings or wants, and to hide, too often for good reasons, what it wants to say, a very high class of compositions. Gipsy life, their adventures and amours, are the subjects of this poetry; and it must be remarked that their language in such case greatly differs from that lent them in books or romances; that haughty love of liberty may be sought in vain which actors evince on the stage under their name. Peoples do not sing praises of what they already possess, and the gipsies do not celebrate their independence, but practise it.

The Romany poets love nature, but they regard it from another point of view than that of our fancy Bohemians. Do you know, for instance, what the worthy porker running about the plain

cries to the Gitano poet? According to a Romany ballad, it says, "Gipsy, come and steal me!" At times the pride of blood swells the veins of the wandering poet. "I do not belong," he exclaims, "to the noble caste; I come from the tree of Egypt, and I do not wish to be a gentleman, but a gipsy, and free." And then there is a yell of anathema and fury at the sight of those small brown children with their naked feet, "who go about reviling Heaven because they have no bread, and meet with no charity on earth." Accidentally, though rarely, a trace of religious feeling expands their souls, which are as harsh and closed as the aloe flower. A mother, who feels ill, bids her child pray for her while he is still innocent, in order that God may appease the troubled heart of the poor woman. Love also draws from this uncultivated lyre a few touching and delicate accents. It is matter of regret that the national songs of the gipsies who appear at the Russian cafés and theatres have not been translated. The translation of the *tsigani* songs would enrich literature with curious monuments, and doubtless open up a fresh perspective in the history of this race, obscure as the forests whence it comes—the wild jungles of India. This consideration would suffice to recommend to the philologist these remains of a people which drags about with it the relics of an old language, and a literature whose wealth is hidden beneath the veil of time.

Every form of thought that dies out is a loss to the whole of humanity, and there is unfortunately but slight hope that, in their present state, a chosen mind will start up from among these wretched hordes to rekindle the torch of the race. An American writer, Mr. Simpson, has, however, asked whether John Bunyan, author of Pilgrim's Progress, that singular, popular, and emblematic book, had not some gipsy blood in his veins. Before becoming an itinerant preacher, John Bunyan went about the country for several years, carrying on with his father the trade of tinker, and we have seen that this was hereditary among the Romany, who probably introduced it into Europe.

All the gipsies cannot devote themselves to music; and, besides, true talent is doubtless as rare among them as among other men. In pointing out those directions apparently indicated by nature, I intend only to call attention to some peculiar faculties of the race; but in certain countries, and under certain circumstances, the Romany have not always proved themselves unfitted for the industrial arts, and they are especially fond of working in metals. In Spain and Russia they have for a long time carried on the trade of forge-masters or blacksmiths, the forge being generally situated on the slopes of a mountain or in the heart of a forest, the trees of which they felled with those clumsy axes they probably brought from distant countries. In the neighbourhood of Granada they

still continue to work iron: the traveller often finds caves inhabited by these gipsy workmen and their families, who live in the smoky entrails of the earth. Any one who stops by night at the entrance of these caves, hollowed in the sides of ravines leading to mountainous regions, enjoys an extraordinary sight. These naked-armed and bronzed Cyclopeans assembled round the forge, and illumed by the flame of the coals, which is excited by monstrous bellows, beat in cadence with their heavy hammers the red iron flashing on the anvil. These wild scenes doubtlessly contributed in no slight degree to keep up the superstitious ideas of the local population, who regard the Gitanos as fantastic beings, and black demons who have emerged from the gully-holes of Hades.

In England the same disposition is modified, and they carry on in their wanderings those metallurgic trades which only need a simple and portable apparatus: there is possibly no more striking instance of the tenacity of certain caste aptitudes. The gipsies are no strangers either to certain branches of trade which can be associated with a nomadic life: in the East many Zingari sell precious stones, and, I am sorry to add, poisons. Of course I should not wish to foster the last branch of trade, but if, in their present state of ignorance, the gipsies are unscrupulous as to the nature of these transactions —if, as regards economic morality, they know nothing but the principle of supply and demand—

still that does not exclude fitness for trade, and these are the faculties of the race I am trying to discover.

I have indicated the style of occupation to which the gipsies seem attracted by a sort of innate instinct. I must now say what are the social professions for which they evince but slight liking. For a long time they were forbidden carrying arms, but the long wars at the close of the reign of Louis XIV. caused this prejudice to be done away with, and the French armies, as well as those of the confederates, enrolled at that period a considerable number of gipsies, though many of them deserted their flag. When Napoleon invaded Spain, he had in his legions a large body of Hungarian gipsies. Their first care in a hostile country was to enter into relations with the Peninsular Gitanos, for with them the love of blood is stronger than the difference of the colours under which they march. Others of them also fought in Spain, but in the English army, during the War of Independence.

There was one day a furious rencontre between two parties: it was no longer an action, but a hand-to-hand fight. In the midst of the confusion, two soldiers, one of whom wore the British, the other the French, uniform, fought desperately. At length the French soldier got his knee on his opponent's chest, and was about to prod him with his bayonet, when, his hat having fallen off, the two champions

recognised each other. "A Zincalo!" the one about to die exclaimed—"a Zincalo!" At these words the victor trembled, loosed his hold, passed his hand over his brow, and wept: then, kneeling by the side of his conquered enemy, he took his hand, called him brother, poured wine into his mouth, raised him, and helped him down the hill, the two armies still continuing to murder each other. "Let those dogs fight and tear each other," said the one who had saved the life of the other; "they are not of our blood; their affairs do not concern the Zincali." They remained talking together till sunset, when they separated, embraced, and rejoined their battalions.

Other gipsies have entered the British army at a more recent period. Some of them, I am told, may still be found beneath the banners of Great Britain, but experience has ever proved that they are not a warlike race. They do not want for courage, but they cannot brook discipline: *à fortiori*, we must expect to find in them an invincible repugnance to a state of domesticity. The physiologist who fancied he had found in self-esteem the root of the feeling of independence, was right as regards the gipsies; their blood, they say with some pride, is not made to serve. Nowhere will they accept restraint; in Hungary, for instance, there are but two classes of freemen, the nobles and the gipsies; the first being above, the latter beneath, the law. The condition of the Hun-

garian Zigani is frequently more wretched than that of the serfs; but they do not care for that, they are their own masters. Mr. Borrow tells us that in cities, especially at Pesth, a toll is demanded of the workmen who cross a bridge; only well-dressed persons and the Zigani are exempted from it. This liberty, which does not include the notion of sacrifice, or respect of the rights of others, certainly only constitutes the shadow of true liberty; but, such as it is, it suits the gipsies; they prefer it to all the advantages they might obtain in the service of the state or of a regular master.

There is another branch of labour still less harmonising with the character of the gipsies, and that is agriculture. They may be seen now and then helping in haymaking and reaping, but it is only accidentally. A chief of the Northamptonshire gipsies, who married the servant of an English family, obtained a farm a few years ago, but though it was advantageous, he left it to reassume his liberty and his profession as musician. These marriages are rare, but there are instances; in Scotland, at any rate in some counties, gipsy blood flows in the veins of certain families belonging to the lower classes. In most of these cases a struggle has set in between the savage and civilised elements; sometimes the wandering humour of the gipsy has brought the family beneath the tent, at others the Saxon character has gained the day and domesticated the husband.

It is by such marriages that the modification of the race will be effected in a given time; but, singularly enough, the gipsy girl resists longer than the man the admixture of blood. The preservation of this Hindoo group amid circumstances apparently of a nature to dissolve, has been for centuries a testimony of the fidelity of the female to the duties and usages of her ancestors. Besides, the wish of the moralist is not that the race of gipsies should be extinguished, but transformed; now hitherto only one way has been discovered for raising the character of the human families, and that is education. The gipsies, owing to their perambulating life, escape this moral influence more easily than others, and they could only be attacked in their winter quarters. The efforts of English philanthropists who propose to ameliorate the condition of this people should, therefore, tend to settle them for a period of the year, and instruct their children. There is but little hope of entirely breaking the chain of habit among the adult gipsies; this result can only be expected from time and new generations, if they were at an early age torn from their ignorance and the force of example. This education should be moulded on the plainly indicated dispositions of the race, otherwise the resistance of the primitive rock will be met with. It would be as well, too, to select those families which evidence some greater degree

of affinity to the social state, for there are degrees in gipsyism and vagabonds among vagabonds.

A grave interest is attached to the experiment, for the gipsies spread over the various European states are estimated at eight hundred thousand; in England there are from twelve to fifteen thousand. The character of the gipsies has hitherto proved itself powerful for evil; is there ground for believing that the forces of this race, which is to a certain extent intelligent, can be directed to good? The problem interests to an equal degree the wandering hordes and the rural population; for the life of the Romany, circumscribed by the progress of civilisation, and by the defensive means with which property hedges itself in this nineteenth century, becomes day by day more gloomy and wretched. During one period rigorous measures were employed to subjugate this vagabond element, but history has proved the impotence of violence employed to this race, which yields to the blow. No one now-a-days in England dreams of reviving this system, and those who take an interest in the fate of the gipsies only hope in future to reconquer them to society with the benefits offered by that society. Education alone, and persuasion and gentle measures, can reunite them to the native population, reconcile them with a home, and attach them to the soil.

The obstacle is in the mutual prejudices; on both

sides forgetfulness and forgiveness might be displayed. The wall of enmity is, perhaps, stronger on the side of the gipsies than of the English rustics; the most difficult point is not to effect a *rapprochement* between the labouring classes and the old pariahs, but to draw these beings, so long despised, so idle and malevolent, nearer to the useful classes. The man who has the most education feels the least hatred.

A system of enlightened and persevering charity would doubtless triumph over the resistance of the gipsies to the laws and duties of the social state; besides, the Romany will have to elect between two prospects: modification or extinction. After wandering about for centuries, will this people, which seems trying to convert the Indian dogma of transmigrations into a reality, be effaced one day, leaving in history only a memory, a name, and a myth? Will this race of black-eyed children, with their skins bronzed by the Eastern sun, be dissipated in time like the smoke of their camp fires? I do not believe it, nor do I desire it. In the sight of the ethnologist, all families, no matter their colour, have a relative value, for all may combine, by different gifts, in the common labour of civilisation. The Romany themselves confess that their caste is dissolving, union is growing weak between them, and the attachment to the laws and customs of their ancestors is diminishing in proportion as the heather disappears

from the soil of Great Britain. These are so many precursive signs of their return to society; and, regarded both morally and politico-economically, this return would be a happy event. The properly understood interest of modern civilisations is not to curse races, but to bless and unite them in one feeling of humanity.

CHAPTER XI.

THE HISTORY OF BEER—SUCCESSIVE INCREASE OF THAT ARTICLE—THE DEPARTURE OF THE HOP-PICKERS—THE HOP-GARDENS NEAR MAIDSTONE—AN ENTHUSIASTIC CULTIVATOR—LIFE IN THE HOP-GARDENS—THE WORKS—THE KILN—BARLEY AND THE MALT-HOUSES—CHARACTER OF THE GENTLEMEN FARMERS.

MODERN Europe is divided into two groups: the Latin races, who drink wine; and the races more or less Saxon, who drink beer. This difference is no stranger to the manners, hygenic condition, and even the moral faculties of the population. The characters of human societies were formed by alliances, but they are consolidated by the mode of life, and especially by the alimentary beverages. The impetuosity of the Latin races, their sparkling wit and warlike ardour, respond to those qualities which have been called the blood of the grape; those nations whom nature has condemned to a sterner beverage are distinguished for their part by strength, patience, reflection, obstinate and encroaching toil.

Only regarding present facts we might be

tempted to believe that beer originally came from the North; but that is not the country of the beverage. The first beer men appear to have drunk was made in Egypt; and the Egyptians, who liked to refer to the gods useful discoveries and social victories, gave the honour of this invention to Osiris. Beer, then, has been from time immemorial the drink adopted in those countries where the vine refuses to grow, either through excess or deficiency of heat. The first colonies which left the East and pierced the gloomy forests of Europe made up for the absence of the fruit which Noah pressed by the means old Egypt had discovered: a liquor made with barley and water. It was the favourite fluid of the Anglo-Saxons and Danes, whom we have seen descend in turn on Great Britain. Before their conversion to Christianity, they believed that one of the chief felicities the heroes admitted after death into Odin's paradise enjoyed, was to drink long draughts of ale from tall cups. Archæologians have made learned and laborious researches to recover the history of beer in Great Britain: it will be sufficient for us to say, that in Wales, ale, even small, was formerly regarded as a luxury, and was only seen on the tables of the great. In England, about the middle of the sixteenth century, Harrison assures us that, when tradesmen and artisans had the good fortune to stumble on a

haunch of venison and a glass of strong ale, they believed themselves as magnificently treated as the lord mayor.

At the present day, what a change! Ale and porter flow into the pewter pots of the humblest taverns; rich and poor—the poor more frequently than the rich—refresh themselves with the national beverage, as the Israelites in the desert slaked their thirst at the water leaping from the rock, to quote a minister of the English Church. This abundance, compared with the old penury, rejoices the social economist from a certain point of view, for he sees in it the natural movement of science, trade, and agriculture, which in time places within reach of the most numerous class articles which, at the outset, were regarded as luxuries. Not only has beer become more available to the working classes, but the quality has improved, and at the present day English beer knows no rival on the Continent.

A liquor which accompanies so many meals, which collects friends at table or round the domestic hearth, whose preparation employs thousands of arms, and which poets have sung, could not fail to exercise some influence on English life. A whole group of urban and rural occupations is attached to the manufacture and consumption of this beverage, which, studied in the various scenes of their activity, from the hop-gardens to the breweries and taverns, will reveal to us some

of the most characteristic aspects of Anglo-Saxon civilisation.

By order of Parliament, English beer can only be made of barley and hops. We will first investigate the latter agricultural product.

The hop harvest begins, according to the year, at the end of August or first week in September. The roads to Kent, Sussex, and Surrey—the three counties that principally devote themselves to hop-growing—are then covered by a multitude of persons on foot going to the hop-gardens. Groups of women, children, old men, at times isolated families, advance with an unequal step, often cheating the length of the road by songs and jokes; altogether it forms an animated and picturesque sight which might be sought in vain at other periods of the year. Some of these travellers come a long distance; you see among them families from Wales, and especially notice Irish women who attract attention by their accent, their impudence, their noisy jollity, and too often, I must allow, by their naked feet. This contrasts with the lady's bonnet, more or less faded, which they have on their heads, and which they adjust with a coquettish air, so that it falls over the eyes to protect them from the glare of the sun. Men and women generally carry on their backs some baggage, and, at intervals, even a dearer object, an infant.

Hop-picking is regarded by the lowest classes as

a grand rural jubilee. At that period of the year the vagabond shakes off his sloth, the wandering tinker puts out his fire, the beggar ceases to hold out his hand, the minstrel deserts his fiddle, the labourer bids farewell for a season to the plough—all proceed to the hop festival. There come together the poor man in decent clothes and the poor man in rags, the workman with an open face and the adventurer with suspicious looks, the honest man and the thief; still the latter does not steal, but works for a season. Among the women the same contrasts are visible: sordid misery and coquettish misery, youth and old age, virtue and vice, but the latter now sanctified by useful employment. All these jostle each other along the road: from station to station the parties stop to make their tea in the open air; the men, seated by the pot, smoke their pipes gaily, or sleep with their hats over their faces, while the girls ramble along the hedges, picking nuts, or unharnessing the donkey which drags in a small cart an old woman and a few household utensils.

Everybody does not go on foot, for that is too dear: many of the immigrants have discovered that the railway was not only a quicker but a cheaper mode of locomotion. At the beginning of the hop-picking in 1859, the Sunday morning train on the South-Eastern, though of unusual length, could not carry the crowd of travellers proceeding to the hop country: a second, then a

third cheap train had to be prepared to convey the pickers to the scene of their labours. On that Sunday alone the number of hoppers thus conveyed, and mostly going from London and Gravesend to Maidstone, amounted to more than three thousand. From this fact we can form an idea of the number of nomadic workmen or extra hands the hop harvest requires in certain southern counties at the end of autumn. The migration of these labourers lasts for more than a week.

When the hop season proves a failure—which happens too frequently—a gloomy distress spreads not merely over the south, where that plant chiefly grows, but also in the most remote northern counties. In those winters the wretchedness is great in the country, and the girls say, pointing to their worn clothing, "What would you have? the hops do not always succeed!" A month before the picking begins, wagers are laid among the labourers, farmers, artisans, and country gentlemen as to the probable amount of the hop duty. Hops are bet on in some districts, as in others races, and immense sums of money are thus lost and won annually. Dinners take place, called hop dinners, in which new bets are made and old ones paid. It often happens that the rich man of yesterday thus becomes the pauper of to-morrow, or the poor man wakes up to find himself master of a considerable fortune.

Let us select as the scene of our observations

Kent, justly called the great hop-growing district of England. The first hop-grounds are found a little beyond Erith, a pretty village on the banks of the Thames, and which is distinguished by an old church proud of its tower, its cloak of ivy, and its tombs scattered beneath the grass. The hop-gardens increase towards Rochester and Chatham, a small town curiously situated at the foot of a bare hill, and which looks in the hollow like a bird's-nest: thence they extend magnificently, and on a far larger scale, to the environs of Maidstone.

At the time when the hop-picking is about to begin the face of Nature offers peculiar features in Kent, that so fertile county. The fields of wheat have lost their white tresses, which have fallen under the scythe: wheat stacks, often eighteen or twenty in number, resembling the huts of savages, rear their conical roofs in the centre of empty and shorn spots, round which clouds of plundering sparrows prowl. The trees have no longer the verdurous lustre or rich uniformity of summer; their foliage displays a deep tinge which I have only seen in England, and which acts as the dark background to the embroidery designed by the young branches, which have all the freshness of spring verdure. With the exception of a few winter fruits, hanging heavily from the trees in the orchards, Nature has given all she promised. Amid this scenery, which has grown sterner with the

progressing course of the year, over which a few slight tints of melancholy are spread, and whose beauties are beginning to decay, the hop-gardens stand out with marvellous grace and youth.

These plantations are surrounded by quickset hedges, generally composed of large shrubs, and which enclose them like an impenetrable wall. The hop is in itself a noble plant, of delicate and bold growth, which climbs to a considerable height along props provided for it. I have seen in England charming summer-houses formed of hops, in which tea was drunk on sultry evenings; a hop is at times the pride and joy of a poor cottage, whose scars it conceals with tendrils which the vine itself might envy. Still the sight of a hop-field is far more imposing. These tall plants, wedded to poles to the top of which they climb, and from which they hang in green garlands; these narrow and mysterious alleys aligned between a double row of foliage; these powerful contrasts of light and shade, which struggle and are finally blended at the foot of the vines in a sort of ravishing clear-obscure; these lovely blossoms, green at first, but which grow yellow as they ripen, and which, shaken by the breeze, spread around at night a strong bitter scent,—all this imparts to what may be called the Saxon vintage a lively character of rustic poetry.

The hop in a wild state has its habitat in Great Britain. I often noticed it in hedges, growing

along solitary lanes, on the skirt of woods, and even among the willows bending over the banks of streams. It flowers in June, and its buds are ripe in September. The poor people gather in spring the young shoots of the wild hop, and boil them, like asparagus, under the name of hop-tops. It is a singular fact that the cultivated plant in England is not descended from the native plant; an old distich teaches us that the turkey, the carp, and the hop, all came to Great Britain in the same year. We mean the hop improved by art, which was really imported from the Netherlands in the reign of Henry VIII. This crop, once introduced, became developed, though slowly, for, like all innovations, it had met with opponents: petitions were more than once sent to the king and British parliament against this wicked weed. The parliament held out, and proved itself wiser than the nation by refusing to attack a branch of cultivation which now supplies the state with a considerable revenue, while at the same time increasing the individual prosperity and comfort of the working classes.

The great migration of hop-pickers, which we saw advancing by every road into the interior of Kent, does not stop at the first hop-gardens near Crayford, for the local population of women and children is sufficient in that village for the task, which is inconsiderable. We must therefore follow the mass of travellers to the neighbourhood of

Maidstone, a pretty town situated on the river Medway, which an old bridge of several arches crosses. Round the church are the remains of historic architecture: a portion of Primate Palace, built in the reign of King John, hangs over the river, which is ever youthful, in spite of the wrinkles the wind forms and the stream effaces. A quiet air of antiquity prevails over this portion of the town, which in other parts affects modern elegance; but the environs, before all, impart to Maidstone a picturesque character. The rich orchards, the old castles, the undulating and wooded outline of the hills, the clean and quiet villages, the hop-gardens, with their graceful festoons, the vines, which let their light tresses droop like an English coquette,—all this forms a type of scenery found nowhere else, and thoroughly explains the words "Happy England."

The first hop-garden at which I stopped, about three miles from Maidstone, was under the care of a superintendent of the picking—a young light-haired man, with bare and vigorous arms, who stood boldly amid the natural garlands with the air of a Saxon Bacchus.

"It's a fine day," he said to me (an Englishman always begins with that). "You're come to see the hop-picking. Well, it's a sight that can't be seen every day, and which must interest a stranger, for I see by your face and accent that you are a Frenchman. The hop is the gem of English

cultivation—a fine plant, but delicate and capricious. The ground that best suits it is this: a deep and greasy surface, with a subsoil of marl and brick-earth. It is not everybody who can make a plantation, for it entails a considerable expense: it is estimated at from seventy to one hundred pounds an acre. And then this plant is subjected to so many diseases, suffers from so many accidents, and makes you pay so dearly for the slightest neglect, that the golden dreams of the farmer often vanish in a night. Hence you must regard as erroneous the opinion usually given in books, that the Kentish farmers bestow all their attention on the hops; the result is too risky for them to trust entirely to those crops. It is true that hop-growing at times produces enormous profits: I have known an acre of hops to produce a clear profit of thirty—ay, of fifty guineas; still to undertake the enterprise, a farmer must possess not only a large capital, but a speculative turn of mind. If it succeed, a hop-field is the pride and love of an enthusiastic farmer. This garden in which you now are was planted seven years ago: it is a fine one, I allow, but, in looking at it, I am sure you do not suspect the trouble and expense it cost. When the ground has been broken up, freed from stones, and enriched with manure—when the young plants have been arranged artistically and symmetrically—the purchase of poles is a heavy outlay. It is necessary for the health of the hops

that air and light should play freely in every direction: thus you will remark that these tall poles are placed so as to leave larger openings towards the south by which the sunbeams may enter. Then the vines must be fastened to the poles: that is a job which employs many hands, principally women. The stems are fastened with withies, but in such a way that the growth is not checked; the hop likes to be supported and protected, but it will not be dictated to. At at later date, when the hops have reached the tops of the poles, workmen come with ladders to pull back those vines which seem inclined to straggle; and thus three or four years pass before a shilling returns to the farmer's pocket. There are some growers who like to pick their hops in the first year, but that is a great injury to future crops. I cannot think without sadness that within a few years this plantation, now so rich, which has demanded so much care, and whose vines are annually covered with such splendid clusters, will undergo the law of time. The hop-plantations live from fifteen to twenty years in good soil, but they begin to decline in the tenth year. Fortunately this year's crop will be fine, and, as you see, there is no want of arms to pick it. We are warned of maturity when the bud or flower containing the seed turns from straw colour to brown: if left longer, it would take a darker tinge, which would not be beneficial. There is therefore no time to lose, and that will explain to

you the great concourse of strangers whom we have engaged for the hop-picking."

This young man, who was the son of a rich farmer, did the honours of his home—for he was really at home among his hops—with thoroughly British courtesy, for English politeness goes straight to the point. I was then led to the various scenes of operations, through narrow alleys of soft earth, which you trample with regret, so much do they seem made for the feet of fairies and birds.

A portion of the forest of hops and poles had already begun to be felled. A workman, who was cutting with a pair of shears the foot of the vines, explained to me that this task must be effected methodically; for if the stalk were cut too close to the ground it would weaken the root, and make it "bleed." He then pulled up the poles with an instrument called a dog, and which certainly deserves the name, if you look at the teeth with which it is armed. These poles were laid on the ground with the plant festooned round them, and were then carried on a cart to another part of the field where the hop-pickers stood. Here the scene grows lively, and offers an interesting character. It is curious to see in the shadow of the still standing hops children of all ages, a few old men, and some two hundred women in gowns of various colours, arranged in a line, and hard at work. All this population is collected in groups round the cribs or bins: that is the name given to a sort of

clumsily-shaped wooden manger, standing on four feet, and having a canvas in the middle to receive the ripe flower of the hop. A man lays horizontally on each of these bins two or three poles covered with long vines, whose light clusters women, girls, and children pluck. Some of these groups, composed of six, seven, or eight persons, are formed by the members of a single family. I saw more than one mother who had her last-born by her side in a cradle or go-cart, and who from time to time left her work to give it the breast.

The hop-picking season is regarded as a jollity: in the first place, the work has nothing about it painful or repugnant, and next, it is nearly the only means by which the labourers' wives and children can earn any money at the end of summer. The assemblage of so many persons in the large hop-gardens gives rise to amusing scenes, which keep up good spirits. If the master be in good humour, and the weather fine, jests, songs, and bursts of laughter go the round in these fields where the silence of nature reigned yesterday. The Irish women are distinguished from the rest by their noisy merriment and incessant chatter, and I confess that the stranger who visits the scene of these labours is frequently the subject of this simple joviality and raillery, which, after all, has nothing offensive about it. The fun, however, does not prevent the nimble fingers from running over the clusters which fall into the bins; when

the latter are full, the master or overseer measures their contents, for the pickers are not engaged by the day, but the job, and only receive their wages at the end of the picking. The pay varies every year, according to the abundance and quality of the crop; the price is only fixed after the work has begun and the owners have had time to consult together. In 1858 a shilling was paid for picking nine bushels of flowers, and some clever workwomen earned as much as half-a-crown a day.

Nightfall suspends the labours, which are recommenced the next morning when the sunbeams have drunk up the greater portion of the dew, for excessive damp would injure the quality of the hops to some extent. The nature of the work does not allow the men or women to leave the garden; the parties of pickers, mostly strangers to each other, therefore sleep in barns and outhouses, and sometimes even under tents. I am convinced that the majority of persons who go hop-picking, though certainly attracted by the desire of gain, are also affected by the taste for an adventurous life and a desire of seeing the country. They readily put up with all the exigencies of their condition, and bravely endure the hard bed on which they sleep. I have been told that ladies, by the advice of their physicians, have secretly gone as hop-pickers. I deny neither the healthy nature of this open-air life nor of these

occupations, which has nothing repulsive even for white and aristocratic hands; but when I consider the rough people working in the large hop-gardens, I am tempted to class these stories among the mediæval fables, where queens hid themselves under shepherdesses' clothes. It is a more certain fact that marriages are arranged and sometimes discounted in the midst of this day and night community, which the nature of the work establishes between the two sexes: an Irish girl, asked in my presence who was the father of her child, replied, I suppose in jest, "He is the son of the hop."

When the hop-flowers have been plucked and measured, they are carried off at once to the kilns to be dried, for if left too long in the bags, in a green state, they would lose their colour and perfume. There is scarce a farm in the hop districts which has not its oast-house, a building expressly erected for drying the crop. The size of these buildings varies with the importance of the gardens: but the shape is nearly always the same, and does not want for character. It is a wooden building flanked by two or three brick turrets, where a corrugated tile-covered cone terminates in a chimney. On the ground floor is a large stock of coal and charcoal which are mixed in the drying-kilns, and a certain proportion of sulphur is added, which imparts to the hops a pleasant colour. The heat ascends, and penetrates into

the upper floor, through a roof of openwork lattice and a horsehair blanket. This floor, which is reached by means of a ladder, consists, first of two or three small rooms in which the hops dry, and next, of a large hall called the storing-room, in which are laid, in two piles, on one side the green flowers coming from the garden, on the other the flowers which are put to cool after having been subjected to the action of the fire.

The dryer must be a skilful workman, for a great part of the profits of the crop depends on it. After six hours' heating, the drying hops must be turned, and taken out after twelve hours. The kiln is at work night and day, and must be closely looked after: if the watcher sleeps now and then, it is only with one eye or one ear, and his mind must not slumber. When we reflect that the hop-drying lasts three weeks or a month, we feel surprised that human strength can endure so rude a trial. All the dryers I saw, though young and robust, had contracted features, red eyes, and an anxious look. To the want of sleep, and the perpetual watchfulness the drying demands, must be added, as a deleterious influence, the strong odour of sulphur breathed in the kilns. One of these workmen having gone away for a moment to drink a glass of ale offered him, very speedily left the table, saying, "The kiln calls me, it is a terrible child, and you have scarce turned your back when it begins playing tricks. I am here,

but my thoughts are where my duty is."* It may be supposed that these painful duties are slightly better paid than those of the ordinary labourer: the kiln-dryer gets four shillings a day, but then his day is of twenty-four hours.

When the dried hops have been five or six days in the stowage-room, they pass into the hands of other workmen. In the floor of the room is a trap, just the size of the mouth of a sack. A man gets into the sack intended to be filled: his duty consists in treading down the hops which another man throws down from the top floor in small quantities at a time. The finest light flowers are placed in neat bags called pockets, and the brown flowers in coarse bags; the former are intended for brewing ale, the latter for porter: this done, all that remains is to send the hops to market. If we reflect on all the preparations this plant requires, we can see that all is not profit to the farmers.

If we wish to form an idea of the entire hop-harvest, we must not stop at one plantation: we must visit the whole of the hop district. The entire country then offers an unusual sight: the parties of pickers seated on the grass at the dinner-hour, the confusion of accents and even of tongues, the quarrels, half serious, half in fun, the diversity of dress, the jests of the young people, the inex-

* The English language, imprinted with a high feeling of morality, calls every function a duty.

tinguishable laughter of the former, the sports of the children, the migrations from one garden to the other,—all this spreads over this branch of agricultural toil a festal air contrasting with the gloomy life of the hands in the factories. The gain is not very considerable, but the jollity, the fresh air, the liberty, the oblivion of yesterday, and the carelessness about to-morrow, enhance the wage. More than one girl, lacking gold, puts hop-flowers in her long hair, with the air of a Bacchánte; the flowers, round and flat, resembling a handful of Italian sequins. It is affecting to see the agreement that exists among this family of labourers, composed of such mingled elements; the strong man gives a hand to the weak, quarrelsome or depraved characters are toned down, vice itself is purified by toiling—perhaps, too, by the holy beauties of nature.

Everybody then forms vows that the weather may remain calm and dry, for rain, fog, and blight not only dull the labours of the pickers, but also injure the quality of the hops. Luckily, the climate of England has been calumniated: there are some fine days, especially in autumn. At other times, it is true, the British sun has not even the warmth of a pale moon; but, such as it is, this sky, laden with profound and undulating clouds, produces to the eye the effects of a magic light, of radiant openings between the closed banks, and horizons full of an undefinable harmony.

Amid the sober beauties of English scenery, the most distinguishing feature of the hop-picking is the taciturn grace of the night, at the hour when it shakes off its crown of hops on the eyes of the pickers, asleep in the farm-barns, or along the solitary lanes, which wind between hedges of hawthorn.*

Towards the end of September all the work is ended, and only a few gardens are left here and there with backward clusters plucked by laggard bands. These felled forests, which will not grow again till spring, leave the country denuded: but winter can come now. Men, women, and children now think of returning to their homes, but, before they depart, they usually have a merry-making. Formerly, it was the custom to choose a Hop-Queen, and I need scarcely add that the ugliest girl was not selected; and even at the present day a trace of this rustic royalty may be found. I met, near Chatham, a cart loaded with male and female pickers, among whom was majestically throned a girl, or a young man dressed in woman's clothes, for it was difficult to decide the sex of this masculine-featured divinity. Entwined and crowned with garlands, this mythological personage held as sceptre a thyrsus ornamented with hops, the whole being accompanied by a merry

* The English attribute somniferous virtues to the hop. A pillow filled with hop-bines has, I have been told, produced sleep in cases where all the resources known to medicine had failed.

band of music. Nor is it rare to find, in Kent, inns, from the doors of which hangs a bunch of clustering hops, and where success is drunk to the harvest: beer is used to celebrate beer. In the mean while, other groups, more steady and peaceable, proceed on foot, but with glad hearts, for the women carry home in their slightly distended purses bread for their family; the children rejoice at having earned their wages, and the girls at the hope of buying a new dress.

As the emigrants withdraw, the anxiety of the farmer as to the sale of the hops begins. "The 'fifty-eight crop was too prolific," I heard said; "it succeeds several years of injurious fertility, and abundance will ruin us." A consequence of this great production is to bring down the price of hops very low: the trade in this article certainly constitutes a branch of doubtful speculation, but the losses resulting from it are often attributable to the greedy character of the dealers. I heard, in Kent, about a great hop-planter, who, during a bad year, refused twenty-eight pounds offered him for a hundred-weight of hops, and he put the crop in his store-room. As the year went on, the price of hops fell instead of rising, and at length became so low that the farmer, in a rage, threw the old hops into the yard to be converted into manure. It is calculated that if this man had sold at the price offered him, he would have made certain of seventeen shillings a day for the rest of

his life. Amid the chorus of complaints raised by the Kentish farmers against the bounties of nature, I was struck by meeting in the train, a few weeks back, a poor ragged old fellow just returned from Maidstone. "Oh!" he said, to me, "how grateful we ought to feel to Providence! the year has been abundant in everything: in wheat, potatoes, and hops; may Heaven be praised!" The gratitude of this poor man for a bounty in which he would have so slight a share, had something simple and touching about it, which moved my heart.

The second substance employed in manufacturing beer is barley, specially prepared and known by the name of malt.

The great London breweries have about the country agents to buy up barley, and send it to the malt-houses. The latter are found all over those districts which may be regarded as the principal granaries of Great Britain: Hertfordshire, Essex, Suffolk, and Norfolk. At Ware, where I stopped at the inn celebrated for a monumental bed, on which twenty people can sleep at once, I counted two hundred malthouses, and at Bishop's Stortford, a town no great distance from it, sixty very considerable establishments of the same nature. In Essex, the malt-houses are favourably situated along the Lea, which falls into the Thames at Barking, and on the banks of the canal communicating with London. In Suffolk

and Norfolk, they are collected round the small seaports on the coasts of those two counties.

The appearance of these establishments is not without a certain character: the building, of great length, is generally built of bricks, with a roof in the shape of the letter A. At the top the only remarkable object is an enormous chimney gyrating with the wind, and conducting the undecided smoke. One of these houses I saw at Brancaster, a pretty village standing about a quarter of an hour's distance from the sea, with a girdle of sand-banks and marshes, over which the tumultuous waves pour at high tide, and may be regarded as a type of this severe and practical architecture. It was built more than a century ago, and I was told that it is the largest in England—an assertion contestable in the present day, but exact in past days. The buildings are seven hundred and fifty yards long, with a double angular roof, four cowls indicating the same number of kilns, and two steeps, capable of containing eight thousand bushels of barley, or the cargo of a small vessel. This vast establishment, I regret to say, is now unoccupied, for there are few persons with sufficient capital to keep it going. I was assured, and believe it fully, that this establishment was formerly supported by the numerous orders that came from Holland, whose coast runs parallel to that of Norfolk.

The interior of the malt-houses is occupied by

a steep at one end of the building, and a kiln lighted at the other. The steep, generally of a square shape, made of stone, receives a quantity of pure water, sufficient to cover the quantity of barley intended to be converted into malt, about eight hundred to one thousand bushels. In these reservoirs the barley remains at least forty hours, when the maltster considers it has been steeped enough. The water is let off, and the grain, taken out of the steep, is thrown on to the bleacher, where it forms a rectangular pile, called the couch. Up to this time the grain displays no visible change: but presently a heat is developed, the thermometer rises, and the fermenting barley exhales a pleasant smell of apple. If you put your hand in the heap, you will find that the grain is lukewarm, and disengages sufficient damp to wet your fingers; it is then said to be sweating. A little while longer and roots make their appearance. I have seen these delicate vermicular roots grow in one night the length of two inches. The whole method of malting consists in developing an artificial germination, which is checked before the green leaves spring out. The means used to repress this vegetation is fire: hence the last task is to dry the barley in the kiln.

This kiln is a room the floor of which is generally made of iron plates pierced with numerous holes. The warm air supplied by the fire burning under the room penetrates through the holes

into the grain, from which it removes all humidity, as well as the dead-born roots (cornings). It is of importance to produce a measured heat, low at first, but gradually increasing, for too high a temperature at the outset might cause the malt to turn black and carbonise. The barley is either dried or roasted; in the latter case, having nearly the flavour of coffee. In England, a fortnight is usually allowed between the moment when the grain leaves the steep and is placed in the kiln. The masses of barley succeed each other without interruption through the different stages of malting, so as to moderate, by the position they occupy, the degree of chemical transformation.

In the malt-house I inspected, a foreman with three men under him did the whole of the work: the foreman had about fifty shillings a week wages, and the workmen fifteen shillings. I could not discover anything particular in the life of these men, who bear a close affinity to the rank of agricultural labourers.

The proprietors of the malt-houses are generally rich people, and ought to be so, for the Exchequer comes on them for large sums always in cash. In Norfolk, they are generally traders, and have vessels of their own to transport the grain to the English markets. These merchants are, at the same time, farmers on a large scale; their vessels, which go out laden with barley, return either from English ports, or those on the Continent

washed by the German Ocean, with a cargo of coal, manure, or oil-cake.

The maltsters do not live at the malt-houses: they inhabit large manors, or pretty houses situate near the scene of their labours; keep a large body of servants, carriage, and horses, go hunting, and lead the life of gentlemen farmers. Some are the sons of their own toil; others succeed to the fortune and trade of their fathers; in the latter case they descend from honest tradesmen's families, who religiously eat hot cross-buns on Good Friday, garnish the chimney vases with oak-galls or leaves on May 29, and have a goose roasted on Michaelmas-day; whose daughters receive Valentines on the morning of February 14, and whose sons let off fireworks on Guy Fawkes' evening. It is not necessary to have received a classical education to become a good maltster: thus, when one of these families sends a son to Oxford or Cambridge, he is intended for a liberal profession: still, the others also receive a good commercial education. They are taught from an early age to become sharp, acute men of business, able to see a long way in their sphere of action.

When converted into malt, the barley is conveyed to the breweries, where another species of labour and a new phase of working life in Great Britain await us.

CHAPTER XII.

MANUFACTURE OF ENGLISH BEER—ALE AND PORTER—THE BREWERY OFFICES—THE STORE-ROOMS—THE STABLES—THE DRAYMEN—THE READING-ROOM AND SAVINGS-BANK—CHARACTER OF ENGLISH BREWERS—THEIR HUMANITY.

THE great London breweries are not merely factories, but towns: looked at externally, these buildings strike you not by a character of beauty, but by the extent and sombre power of their construction. I will choose, as a type of the genus, Barclay, Perkins, and Co.'s brewery, the oldest in London, and the largest existing in the world.

A style of clumsy, but cyclopean architecture; a main entrance which cannot be passed without written permission; a wall of circumvallation justifying the proverb, "whoso embraces too much squeezes badly," and whence escape strange buildings forty feet in height, of stone or iron; lines of grand monotony, broken at intervals by the picturesque disorder of angles and semicircles; aërial bridges, straddling across streets and connecting

buildings, windows without glass, but supplied with clumsy movable jalousies; high walls, blackened by weather and the coal-smoke, through which the beer soaks and drips; yards succeeding on yards; roofs surrounded by a terraced platform, from which the Sphynx of modern trade can regard the extent of its domains, saying: "All this is mine," — granaries, storehouses, engine-rooms, stables,—all this is enough to justify the title of the "Leviathan of Breweries" given to this establishment, which is situated in the Borough, one of the oldest quarters of London, in the midst of a labyrinth of poor and muddy streets. A literary reminiscence is attached to this Babylon of manual labour; for the celebrated Dr. Johnson was one of the executors of Mr. Thrale, the first owner of this brewery. I read that he might be seen running about here with an inkhorn and pen in his button-hole, like an exciseman; and the workmen still point out a small room in which, if we may believe tradition, the Doctor wrote his Dictionary.

In 1856, there were in Great Britain 2514 breweries. These establishments, which require the command of a large capital, generally produce enormous profits. I was told in Scotland of a capital which, placed in the brewery trade, increased in sixteen years from 200,000 to 600,000 pounds. The lucky brewer bought a regal residence in the Highlands, had hunts of a princely

character, kept his race-horses, and married a lady of noble blood. His fortune and his wife's brought him in 15,000*l.* a year. The country brewers of England and Scotland, however, offer nothing comparable with those of London.

To Barclay and Perkins, we can only oppose Truman and Hanbury, situated on the other side of the Thames, in Brick-lane, the one representing the old, the other the new style. In one of the yards of the latter establishment you read on a stone fastened in the wall, the limits of this industrial empire. As a whole, however, Truman's brewery is not so extensive as Barclay and Perkins's, but it is more compact. Here buildings rise on buildings, engines are ranged beside engines. During the last few years, Truman and Co. stand at the head of the London firms, as regards production. Most of the master brewers of London belong to old City families, and have long formed a powerful corporation, almost a dynasty, sometimes designated by the name of the twelve Cæsars of the barrel.

The interior of English breweries, to which there is nothing comparable on the Continent, presents more than one interesting scene to the student of manners. It is curious to see the malt and hops become beer, especially in such enormous proportions. I will restrict myself to a description of the principal phases of this transformation, with which are connected the various

branches of labour, the extraordinary movement of the engines, and the peculiar part played by the various groups of workmen.

The malt, which we left in the country, we now find piled in sacks in immense granaries, which, despite their venerable appearance, bravely bear the load. The malt is taken from the store-rooms to be ground as required; there is a rolling-room, in which one hundred and forty sacks of malt can be ground in an hour. On emerging from the teeth of these machines, this coarsely-ground flour mounts by a Jacob's ladder to the top of the building, a height of sixty feet; which ascent is effected by the miraculous agency of steam. The steps on this Jacob's ladder, however, are not occupied by angels, but by iron boxes attached to a gutta-percha band of indefinite length.

The malt, thus pulverised and removed, is now about to undergo its changes. We must follow it into another department of the brewery, the first scene of the chemical combinations, where it is mixed with water (mashing). The Act of Parliament decreeing that English beer must only be made of malt and hops, makes no mention of water; but the brewers did not think it their duty to respect the law by neglecting this indispensable auxiliary. We may now ask whence this water comes: the common opinion is that all the great London breweries derive their water from the

Thames, recently christened the "river of death;" and some persons go so far as to believe that the impurities of the river contribute to the generous qualities of the beer, by giving it a body. This opinion allows discussion, however. In the first place, several large houses, as for instance, Truman and Hanbury, do not obtain their water from the Thames at all: they have an artesian well, dug to the depth of seven hundred feet. Other brewers, it is true, such as Barclay and Perkins, though also having an artesian well, draw their stock of water from the Thames, but at a spot twenty miles up the river. Under such conditions, the river water is certainly preferable to that of the wells; and the English, who possibly feel a touch of national vanity, even declare it the best in the world. It is soft and free from those mineral principles which artesian waters are asserted to contain.

Another agent, no less necessary than water in brewing, is fire: all the large breweries have one or two engines of from forty to sixty horse-power. These engines do more work than all the men put together: steam is the material soul of the house; it gives life to the machinery, fills the vast halls with noise and movement, and spurs on the fires, from which it rises again like the phœnix. Its invisible arm unloads the malt-sacks, brought in waggons; it transports them from one granary to the other; cleans the barrels, and raises and carries

for great distances the streams of beer. Whoever has visited these establishments—unique in the world—has stood in amazement at the number and power of the ever-burning furnaces. There are often in one brewery from fourteen to sixteen chimneys, representing an annual consumption of from four to six thousand tons of coal.

The feeling experienced on entering the places where the beer is made is a surprise. The extent and irregularity of these rooms, the variety of spiral iron staircases clambering all around, the galleries, platforms, the colossal vats, the machines of every size and shape, some in motion, others at rest, all produce a sort of confusion of ideas. I fancied myself transported to the kingdom of Brobdingnag, and the men around me, though tall and strong, only seemed imperceptible Gullivers, crushed as they were by the massive proportions of the instruments of labour, especially the mash-tuns and boilers.

The mash-tun is a Titanic wooden vat, in which an enormous quantity of malt is placed, determined by the importance of the brewery and the season of the year. The water is heated in the boiler, and this volume of water, equal at least to that of the malt, is poured into the vat, where a turning screw, armed with five or six formidable arms, agitates, mingles, and whirls the recalcitrant particles of barley-dust. When the mechanical labour is ended, the vat is covered up

and left to rest for two or three hours, during which the marriage of the malt and water is consummated. After this a tap is opened, and the liquid, now called wort, flows into an immense wooden reservoir (underback), where it forms a real pond of a fine amber colour, with a transparent clearness and a peculiar but agreeable smell.

After a certain time, this pool dries up: having been separated from the malt, which it leaves at the bottom of the vat, the wort is pumped by the gigantic force of the engines into the coppers. It is difficult to imagine anything more imposing than these copper vessels, with their cavernous sides, in which, when empty, the human voice produces a formidable echo, and in which, when full, the liquor boils with the noise of a tempest. Round openings level with the ground, or formed in the walls, smoke at regular distances like craters: these are the mouths of the coppers. A few years ago, a man at Truman and Hanbury's fell into one of these gloomy cavities of boiling liquid, when he disappeared and perished simultaneously. The firm had the whole vatful drained off, amounting to one thousand eight hundred barrels, and entailing a loss of one thousand pounds.

The wort is allowed to boil for several hours, and while it is in the copper, a certain quantity of hops is added. The effect of this plant is to

perfume the beer; this quality is attributed to an odoriferous oil, which, while imparting to the beer a bitter and pleasant taste, keeps it for years. The brewers put more hops in the beer intended for export than in that for home consumption; but, in spite of their aromatic virtues, hops have been only employed in English breweries since 1524, their place having been previously occupied by spices.

There are two sorts of English beer, both greatly renowned and perfectly distinct—ale and porter. It is generally believed that these two beverages require a different mode of manufacture, but that is an error: the difference is in the darker colour of the hops, and a certain proportion of roasted malt added to produce porter. Most of the large houses brew ale and porter simultaneously; others, like Meux's, only manufacture the latter. It has been remarked, besides, that excellent ale could be produced on a small scale, while good porter is only obtained in large breweries where enormous masses are operated on. These two varieties of the same beverage are not in equal demand, and the difference indicates on which side the English preference lies: generally, four times as much porter is made as ale; hence porter is the true British wine.

When they leave the coppers, the porter and ale set out on their travels by steam, one to one

side, the other to the other, in separate buildings, and always at a considerable height, for beer rises in proportion as it becomes made. We must climb up ladder after ladder to the top of the building, where we shall find ourselves gazing on a black sea that fills the coolers, immense reservoirs placed under the roof, in the airiest and best exposed part of the brewery.

The wort leaps in waves on to this iron or wooden bed, and spreads into a steaming lake. The next point is to cool the liquid as quickly as possible; for if the wort remained long in its hot state, it would turn sour and the whole brewing be lost. The superiority of the large English breweries consists, then, partly in the construction of the coolers: having a vast superficies and but slight depth, they are arranged so as to reduce the temperature of the wort to that of the atmosphere in the smallest possible time. Sometimes there are open windows, at others they are covered with movable jalousies, which send a current of fresh air over the surface of the lakes. It is curious to see the apparatus attached to the feet of the workmen for the purpose of walking in these basins: just imagine, clogs supported by two iron brackets, resembling those which an English geologist fancied he discovered in certain antediluvian birds destined to wade through the marshes of the old worlds.

Still, the wort has not yet finished its peregri-

nations: from the coolers it pours in cataracts—but regulated cataracts — into the fermenting squares, or gyle tuns. Fermentation is an important feature in the manufacture of the English wine: through it the sweet and mild liquid called wort is converted into the energetic and intoxicating beverage called porter. It is a striking moment when the yeast is thrown into these deep and immense wooden vessels: presently the mass of liquid is agitated, air bubbles escape, and islets of whirling foam form on the surface of this black ocean. At a later date, if you look through the trap employed by the workmen to watch the liquid, you will discover nothing but a thick cottony layer, of the colour of snow which has lain for some days on clayey ground. The first time I visited one of the great London breweries, the guide raised one of the flaps hiding these reservoirs from sight, and maliciously invited me to approach: I inhaled a knock-me-down vapour produced by the disengagement of carbonic gas; a little longer and I should have been intoxicated.

The beer is allowed to ferment for two days and a night, and the work of decomposition is arrested at the moment when the liquid would turn to acidity, after developing a certain quantity of spirit. From the fermenting squares the beer is then conveyed into the rounds, that is to say, a double row of barrels, whose open mouths communicate with a species of wooden trough, running

with an incline all along the room. Here the beer is purified by throwing off the scum at the mouth of the barrel, and this operation is called cleansing.

The beer is now made, but it gains by being kept some time before being sent out: it is therefore deposited in the store-house. These spacious cellars, lighted by gas, and in which the architecture reminds you of the style of Roman cathedrals, with gloomy pillars and slender columns of man's height, are not the least curious part of the brewery. The pyramids of barrels, piled up or rolled along the damp ground; the daylight struggling with the gloom or the gas-lamps; the workmen with their herculean shoulders coming or going in the galleries, all produce a scene which Rembrandt would have loved; but all we have yet seen is surpassed, at any rate in grandeur, by the monster vats, which are such as Gargantua must have seen in his dreams.

Truman's brewery has one hundred and thirty-four of these vats, of which some contain as many as 2200 barrels of porter, and are supported by iron columns. In such wooden vessels the beer finishes its ripening. The stay it makes in the store-house depends on its destination; for that which is going to the country, or over the sea, requires a longer rest than what will be drunk in London. One of the polite attentions offered the visitor in these magnificent establishments is a pint

of stout, and this excellent beverage, which has not yet undergone trade adulteration, is well suited to give an idea of the richness of the English wine.

We now know how beer is produced; we have still to see how it is distributed.

So soon as the liquid is sufficiently ripe, it passes from the vats into ordinary barrels. It is not rare to find in Truman and Hanbury's brewery as many as 80,000 casks belonging to the firm, which move about the yards under the action of steam, like the rings of an enormous boa constrictor. When new, each of these casks costs a guinea, so we have at once an investment of 84,000*l.* The barrels are conveyed to the dealers by means of horses and an army of draymen. No one who has passed through London streets but has remarked these teams of elephantine steeds, drawing far from ugly trucks, and guided by a red night-capped Hercules, who holds in his hands a handsome copper-mounted whip.

The stables of the English breweries are fabulous. In some of them stand from 150 to 200 horses, divided by rich iron railings. Each horse has its name and place written over the manger, and I noticed Havelock, Campbell, Blücher, Bayard, Milton, Remus, Nelson, &c. These noble animals, when I saw them, were munching beans without suspecting, at least apparently, the glorious memories they bore. I must, besides, warn

my reader that these names are purely official, and the draymen employ others more familiar and better suited both to the ears of the animals and the tongues of their drivers. Of every hundred Englishmen there are ninety who believe that the brewery horses owe their size to their food, consisting, in their idea, of grains. This is, however, a mistake, for horses will not touch them, and they are sold to graziers to be eaten by cows, whose milk they enrich.

These Colossal members of the equine race generally come from Lincolnshire: their food consists of a mixture of hay, lucerne, and barley. Some of them cost as much as 80*l.* apiece, and the average period of their service is from six to eight years. The intelligence and good character of these creatures equal their ardour, strength, and rude complaisance under harness. At the moment I visited one of these stables, a young lady was patting with her delicate hand the clumsy hairy head of one of these powerful animals, which seemed to respond to this honour with brutal grace. One of the glories of social economy in England is in having created different races of the same animal, which admirably answer to the different branches of labour, from the thin-flanked racer to the sturdy dray-horse.

The large breweries employ from 350 to 400 workmen. We may feel surprise, on seeing the mass of production realised, that such industrial

results are obtained with so few arms; but we must never leave out of sight, in calculating the amount of strength, one labourer who works for a thousand—steam. The men employed in the English breweries are distinguished by a peculiar and traditional attire—a round hat of oilcloth, off which the rain glides; a sort of wide white jacket descending to the knees; trousers of the same colour, high gaiters, and a leathern apron.

The most remarkable among them for height, dress, and large Saxon faces, are the draymen, who seem to belong to some extinct race of giants. If we may believe certain medical statements, the health of these men is not so good as their Herculean muscles and the rich hue of their blood seem to indicate. The wounds of draymen, we are told, cure but slowly, and their diseases have special grave characteristics. In the matter of health, they endure the inconvenience of corpulence: they are chosen for their size, and, as it were, by weight, like the Life Guards. Some of the breweries employ as many as a hundred of these draymen, who have stable lads under them. "In the event of war," one of Barclay and Perkins's workmen said to me, "we could turn out a squadron of heavy cavalry."

The wages vary according to the rank and importance of the workman, from one pound to three pounds a week. It is not generally known abroad what ease and liberty of mind this regularity of

weekly payment produces among the labouring classes of Great Britain. The markets and tradesmen consequently lay in stocks for Saturday night, and the different quarters of the town then assume a singular air of animation. Such a mode of payment, at the same time, ensures the workman a happy Sunday, and protects him from those excesses too often entailed by affluence coming after a lengthened period of privation. The brewers' men receive, in addition to their wage, a daily ration of beer. The formidable corpulence of these men is generally attributed to their immoderate consumption of beer; but we cannot share this opinion, for the limit laid down by the firm is rarely exceeded. Drunkenness must not be sought at the places where the means of producing it are elaborated, and this muscular power is rather a feature of race.

Some London breweries only look to physical strength in the choice of workmen; others, on the contrary, require intelligence. In the latter establishments, a certain degree of education, very elementary of course, is more or less required, and some of the firms have even displayed an anxiety to develop the germs of moral culture. You do not see without interest, the word "Library" written on a wall in one of the yards at Truman and Hanbury's, and it is composed of at least two thousand volumes, lent to the workmen for the modest subscription of one halfpenny per

week. You need only turn over the books to convince yourself that they are not idle, but have passed through a great number of hands. Formerly, a reading room was attached to the library, but the experiment was not successful: and it is easy to understand that men who had endured the toil of the day would not be inclined to return in the evening to the scene of their labours. This institution, besides, demanded from family life certain sacrifices which the English workman rarely makes: he likes to read by his fireside with his wife and children around him. His great day of moral education is the Sunday: I do not allude merely to that imparted in church, but to the cheap weekly papers and magazines sold on that morning by millions. A French journal caused the English a hearty laugh some time back by teaching them that in their country there was no people's journal: I have counted more than one hundred and fifty particularly addressed to the working classes, and the majority enjoying an enormous circulation.

The old breweries generally leave the workmen at liberty to take care of their savings as they please, but Truman and Co. wished to develop in their servants a feeling of foresight, by establishing a few years back a savings bank. This institution has borne good fruit; I do not mean merely in deposits, which in 1854 amounted to twelve thousand pounds, I allude

specially to the habits of order it has produced, and the tastes for dissipation it has combated.

Even in those breweries where these institutions do not exist, the widow and children of the workman do not rap in vain at the door of these princely establishments, in which opulence renders the exercise of charity easier. Nor is this generous feeling absent from the hearts of the workmen, who help each other voluntarily and without publicity; for one of the features of English philanthropy is, to do good by stealth; perhaps they are good because they are strong. To a blood that easily revolts against injustice or acts of inhumanity—and they have more than once furnished proof of it—the brewers' men unite a feeling of tenderness towards all who are weak and powerless. A child deserted a few years back at the gate of one of the great London breweries was adopted by the workmen, who clubbed together to provide the educational expenses; they gaily christened it "the child of the vat."

The beer leaves the breweries to be spread among the public-houses, where it is sold retail. This is a new branch of trade and subject for investigation, which must not be neglected, especially if it be true, as an English physiologist asserts, that the character of a people is better displayed in the hours of relaxation and pleasure than amid the cares of business.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE MEANING OF CERTAIN INSCRIPTIONS—THE SIGNS—BEER WON THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO—THE TALBOT, OR TABARD—DRUNKENNESS IN LONDON—THE TEMPERANCE SOCIETIES—A VILLAGE PUBLIC-HOUSE.

THE foreigner who walks about London streets, or in the country along the high roads, must have been struck by the repetition of the same proper names, written in letters more or less gilt on the boards over the public houses. One of them, reading the name of Whitbread at distance to distance along the road, asked whether that gentleman was not a species of Marquis de Carabas, to whom every house belonged. I dissipated his illusion by telling him that public-houses had two boards, one bearing the name of the brewer, which is generally more visible, the other indicating the name of the publican. Now, it frequently happens that a great number of public-houses following each other on the high road are supplied by the same brewer.

Another circumstance perplexes the traveller,

who feels, in deciphering the inscriptions of modern society, the same interest which certain savans display in reading the ensigns of dead civilisations. I allude to the word "entire," placed after the name of the brewer who supplies the house. The meaning of this word, of which even some Englishmen are ignorant, is as follows: before the year 1730, the English publicans sold to the thirsty souls of their day three sorts of beer, which they drew from three different casks into the same glass, and gave to this mixture the name of half-and-half. The owner of one of these publics (history has handed down his name), Horwood, wishing to spare himself the trouble of performing this task so constantly during the day, hit upon brewing a beer which would combine the qualities of all these beers. To this compound he gave the name of "entire," which has adhered to it till this day, at least on the signboards. It was afterwards christened "porter," because principally drunk by that class.

The boards swung as signs to the public-houses are most frequently supplied by the breweries, and for this purpose they keep a painter. It is his duty not only to gild the letters, but also to paint the various signs of the dealers: giraffes browsing on the foliage of a tree, red lions, green men, white harts, white horses, Robin Hoods, Uncle Toms, Falstaffs, Marquises of Granby, and

a great number of politicians, some dead, others living. Among these signs, which flourish most on the high-roads, some possess an historic interest, and their origin has considerably perplexed the learning of the literary archæologists.

The celebrity of the signs dates from a period when it was not yet the fashion to number houses: but there is this peculiarity in English history, that these signs have figured on medals of copper, lead, or tin, struck by the shopkeepers themselves and possessing a monetary value. These farthing or halfpenny-pieces served a double purpose: they were a current advertisement of the house whose sign they bore, and supplied the issuers with means to change silver coins at a time when small money was excessively rare. The most interesting among these are those brought into circulation by the old London taverns, between 1648 and 1672; and on them are found the signs of several inns still in existence; as, for instance, the famous Cock near Temple Bar, a luxurious bird, which, if we may believe tradition, drank its wine out of a silver goblet, and ate gilt barley, no better nor worse than Caligula's horse.

A few anecdotes are connected with these inns and signs. Thus I read that a cockney was on board a vessel running along the English coast during a violent storm, and the unhappy fellow, a prey to the *mal de mer*, and still more so to

fear, wringing his hands, exclaiming "Oh, if I could but see the two Stars, or only one of them!" The captain angrily asked him what he meant. "I mean," he replied, "the spot where we meet every evening, and where we shall never meet again—the Star in Coleman-street, and the Star in Pudding-lane."

A few London houses have remained faithful to their old sign; others have changed it or modified its meaning, so as to adapt it to religious and political revolutions. The *Salutation* at Billingsgate first represented the angel Gabriel saluting the Virgin Mary; but, to suit the name of the establishment to Protestant ideas, the meeting of two men bowing to each other was substituted for the religious scene. The English literature of the eighteenth century has rendered celebrated that other publican who lived near Islington, and first put up the sign of the King of France: when war broke out between England and France, he changed it for the Queen of Hungary; but when she ceased to be in favour with his customers, he dethroned her, and the image of the King of Prussia reigned in her stead.

In the United Kingdom, there are 92,065 beer-houses, of which 39,789 have a license allowing it to be drunk on the premises, and 3765 not so. These figures show how much such establishments respond to the wants, tastes, and manners of the population. My French readers will probably be surprised on hearing

that most Englishmen prefer, at any rate as general beverage, beer to wine, and will be inclined to think with a smile of the fable of the Fox and the Grapes; but the inhabitants of Great Britain act in perfectly good faith when celebrating the national drink. Beer has inspired their poets, their artists, their great actors: they remember the tavern near Temple Bar, where Swift, Addison, Garth, and Steele met. An English workman who had been engaged for a long time in a wine-producing country, said to me, after describing all his sufferings and privations, "If John Bull forgot his beer, he would forget his country: but, before it came to that, his tongue would cleave to the roof of his mouth."

The English attribute to the use of this liquid the iron muscles of their labouring classes, who struggle so valiantly, afloat and ashore, in factories and vessels, for the power of Great Britain: they even attribute their victories to it. "Beer and wine," an orator exclaimed at a meeting where I was present, "met at Waterloo: wine red with fury, boiling over with enthusiasm, mad with audacity, rose thrice against that hill on which stood a wall of immovable men, the sons of beer. You have read history: beer gained the day."

Formerly England had vines of which it boasted, as it now boasts of its barley and hops. In Henry the Eighth's time these vines surrounded Windsor Castle, but either the temperature has changed, or the chroniclers of that age gilded the grapes

with fancy colours: the grapes have disappeared and the English endure the loss. It is correct to say that the English make wine of all sorts of fruits still, but their native wines, to which but very little importance is attached, do not enter at all largely into the general consumption. The true patriotic beverages are ale and porter. Ale is the wife of porter, if I may venture to use the expression; it is caressed with the most flattering names: to believe the public-house signs, it is fine, brilliant, splendid; while, on the other hand, porter is strong and celebrated. One of the consequences of this double alimentary beverage is their substitution for bread among the northern people: and we shall not feel surprised at such a dietetic result if we reflect that beer contains, in a liquid form, the same substantial principles which the produce of our bakeries contains in a solid form. The Latin races eat bread: the Saxon drink it.

Formerly a distinction was drawn between inns, taverns, and public-houses.

Inns now belong to the history of old England: their reign ended with that of the stage-coaches. Still, a few may be found in the old quarters of London: the oldest is the *Talbot*, or *Tabard*, to which a literary interest is attached, because it had the honour of being mentioned by Chaucer in his "Canterbury Tales." Others are the *Cross Keys*, the *Grapes*, the *Four Swans*, the *Green Dragon*, and the *Bull*, which, if we may believe

antiquarians, existed prior to 1750. We may form an idea of what inns were in London and the country from Hogarth's pictures of these old inns; some have disappeared, others have been touched up, regenerated, and transformed, especially since the introduction of railways. These houses, though brought to harmonise more or less with the ideas and wants of the day, have retained, beneath the coat of plaster, an air of antiquity and a separate character, rendering them interesting to the artist. There you breathe the air of olden time: English poets have delighted in depicting in glowing tints these vanished epochs of their history: perhaps this is only a confession of the powerlessness of the human heart, which, unable to seize happiness in the present, places it in the fictions of the past or in the dreams of the future.

The public-houses or gin-palaces have taken the place of the old inns, while the taverns, I have reason to believe, have been substituted for the public-houses. Taverns are kept on a more respectable footing; wine is sold in them as well as beer; you find little food there, but in an age when, according to the phrase of an English Conservative, nobody will keep his place, this distinction is being daily effaced, the humbler public-houses evincing pretensions to become taverns.

The interior of these numerous establishments offers some interest as explanatory of English

society. There is, in the first place, the bar, before which men and women stand to quench their thirst by draughts of amber fluid. The pewter pots, I concede, have not the elegance of Etruscan vases, but they are of an honest Saxon shape, which time has but slightly modified. The other divisions of the public-house are the tap-room and the parlour. The latter, cleaner, better lighted, better decorated, in a word, more respectable, is generally frequented by small tradesmen, clerks, actors, and reporters. The tables are, to a certain point, isolated by wooden compartments: separation in union—the type of English life. Each of the rooms has its regular company, whose character varies according to the quarter of the town and the well-known traditions of the public-house. Some form a circle of profound politicians, who collect at night after business to read the papers and talk over events: but the art most generally cultivated is music; harmonic societies give there once a week, or month, amateur concerts, in which the conversation or singing is diversified by draughts of beer.

The tap has no communication with the parlour, for the whole economy of English society exists in a powerful division of classes. The rank and condition of persons in England are recognized even by the way in which the door is rapped at. Still, it would be unjust to regard the barriers raised in England between the various classes as insur-

mountable, for, so soon as any citizen emerges from his station through his distinguished talents, he is at once admitted into another sphere. There is more than one instance of this in trade, the arts, and literature.

To describe the character and customers of the different public-houses, we should have to embrace the whole of London life, from the highest to the lowest grade, from the West-end to Wapping. Some of these establishments are very large, and affect a sumptuous taste: the bar is attended to by pretty girls, protected from all human seductions behind the imposing serenity and the Olympian majesty of business. The vast cellars are emptied and filled every week with huge iron-hooped barrels, and the brewers' horses, in spite of their strength, have been more than once dragged down the yawning abyss. The publican presides solemnly over the bar: here, all is quiet enjoyment, light, and comfort, combined with elegance.

In the populous quarters, on the contrary, the external face of public-houses grows darker; and though some of these establishments retain an air of luxury, it is dirty and smoke-stained luxury, announcing the palace of orgie. Here, the poorer classes seek bitter consolation for the habitual evils of an uncertain life. The law leaves to the publican's conscience the care of restraining those excesses, which it is unfortunately to his interest to foster. One of these public-houses, known by the

name of *Dirty Dick's*—round the narrow and dark door of which, in Bishopsgate, a strange population collects, of ragged men and women—refuses, however, to serve any customer more than one glass of intoxicating liquor; I was told that a tragic event occasioned this custom—a man fell down dead at the bar after several copious libations. I must add that this limit, though right and moral in itself, does not check abuses; thirsty people can easily leave the house and enter another.

In Wapping and Shadwell, the head-quarters of sailors, the taverns have a singular appearance; we find here a confusion of all languages, the assemblage of all costumes, more or less stained with tar, and all the colours of the human skin. An African queen, who arrived in London about four years back, chose, as her black Majesty's palace, a public-house in the vicinity of St. Katharine's docks. Some public-houses are closely allied with those "Mysteries of London," which have been so much abused lately that I have no inclination to delay with them. The gloomy and winding passages of certain houses, at the door of which flashes a sinister joy, lead too often to the abysses of prostitution, intoxication, and wretchedness.

Statistics denounce in London 150,000 habitual drunkards; but there is something even more sad than drunkenness, and that is, the craving for it. It is not uncommon to see at the doors of public-

houses, a palsied man of forty, with eyes dilated with covetousness, with epileptic quiverings, and dressed in rags, who regards with a sullen and fascinated air the pots of beer to which happy mortals, his brothers, greedily place their lips; you might call him the ghost of Tantalus. There are some seasons of the year when intoxication is periodical, for the Englishman is regular even in his excesses. This epidemic specially prevails during Christmas week and Whitsuntide. The London policemen have then plenty to do, if only in placing and removing on stretchers dead-drunken women, mostly Irish, some of whom display, beneath the brand-mark of brutalisation, traits of youth, and at times a beauty saddening to behold. The policeman is the martyr, the hero, the good genius of public order; it is impossible to tell with what stoical grandeur he endures the insults of delirium, with what patience and gentleness he handles these corpse-like drunkards.

The ravages of such a social scourge, not only afflict the streets, but desolate families. In the great industrial cities, such as Liverpool, fathers and mothers have been known to pledge their children's clothes for the sake of drink. Beer, I am bound to say, is not solely responsible for these excesses and domestic tragedies, for the majority of cases of drunkenness must be referred to gin and whisky, those two liquors, perfidious as the wave, whose transparence they possess,

and which drown the reason. When whisky was introduced into Scotland, it was at first only employed as a pharmaceutical remedy; the physicians of that day kept it under lock and key, and alone possessed the privilege of selling it to the sick. Now, this mountain-dew spreads a fever-fire through the veins of a working population; the remedy has become a poison, a general and attractive poison, that makes more victims, I am confident, than the cures it effected as a remedy. Intoxication, however, is not a vice peculiar to Great Britain, but I must remark, that the northern peoples seem more inclined to the use of strong drinks than southerners. This need, determined by climate, borders close on the abuse.

A vice which kills the mind and body, which fills the mad-houses, and renders impotent all attempts made to elevate the moral character of the working classes, has necessarily attracted the attention of English legislators. It was thought that the mania for intemperance might be combated, to a certain extent, by closing the public-houses on Sunday during the period of divine service, but this law has not reached the point aimed at, for the public-house customers fetch up during the evening the time they were compelled to lose during the day. There are fair grounds for asking, with the Sunday League moralists, whether the opening of certain public establishments, such as the Museum and Crystal Palace

would not more victoriously combat drunkenness, the daughter of idleness, by opposing to it powerful means of diversion in the sight and study, even superficial, of objects of art, which elevate the mind. In Scotland a few partial restrictions were lately introduced to the trade in spirits, and this legal limitation appears to have exercised a successful influence over the habits of the population. The English, on the contrary, kick against everything that seems to encroach on individual liberty, and it would be difficult to persuade them that a people can be rendered sober by act of parliament. The government are aware of the evil, and lament it, but they do not possess the right, perhaps not the power, to redress it, and they leave to the temperance societies any interference in a question of public morality.

The teetotallers form a fraternity which has in every town its meeting-place, statutes, and propaganda, in the shape of books and journals. I have visited some of their tea-meetings; they are interesting affairs, at which certain public confessions made by old converted drunkards may be heard. They relate, with a simplicity which imparts a dramatic character to their confessions, the feelings of a man, thrust, with open eyes and enchained will, towards a bottomless precipice; the species of stupor with which they watched their own ruin; the nature of their dreams, in which, during burning fever, they imagined they

were drinking at a stream of pure water; and, lastly, their impotent struggle against the demon of inveterate habits, followed by a state of darkness, trouble, and moral annihilation, when *reason only visited them during intoxication.* Their revelations open up a gloomy prospect as to the interior of certain English households; the children who cry because they have no bread, mothers counting through the night, with beating heart, the moments, the hours, the husband spends at the pot-house; the clothes and linen, the fruits of the wife's saving, pitilessly hurled into the fire by the maddened sot. To these gloomy pictures are opposed, as contrast and motives of encouragement, the example of drunkards ransomed, delivered, and regenerated by the Temperance Society. Unhappy workmen, whose life was only dissipation, wretchedness, and mental degradation, have found, in their new habits of life, strength, comfort, domestic peace, and the esteem of the world. Some of them are now established, manage shops and farms, put money in the savings bank, or buy land. The members of these free fraternities take a pledge never to touch fermented liquors, save in cases of illness and by the doctor's order.

The temperance societies doubtless considered that the end must be passed in order to reach it; but it is not the less true that this extreme austerity injures the development of such institutions. Some English moralists, while not rejecting

the services of this useful propaganda, calculate before all on the progress of education to combat a vice destructive of human dignity. It is allowed in Great Britain that drunkenness is most frequently the bitter fruit of wretchedness and ignorance; the diffusion of education and comfort, we may be allowed to believe, will extirpate the abuse of spirituous and fermented liquors, without proscribing their use.

The teetotallers, who are of American origin, if they succeeded, would rob English manners of their characteristic features. Beer confirms friendship by a visible sign, it aids and sanctions commercial transactions: in fact, it is not quite a stranger to affairs of state. During elections, the public-houses don the colours of one of the candidates, about whom votes are wavering: it is curious to see at that period these houses covered from top to bottom with painted bills, displaying the name of the politician adopted by the tavern. Each of these establishments is at that time the scene of animated, sometimes stormy, discussions. These solemn interests associated with the vulgar habits of life, impart to the public manners a character of grandeur and originality only found among free peoples: if the candidate supported by the tavern emerge victorious from the struggle, the house takes its share in the triumph, and the election is baptised with repeated bumpers.

In many English towns the public-house serves

as the meeting-place for one of those numerous friendly societies existing among the working and agricultural classes. The object of these mutual assurance institutions is to support the sick workman by weekly contributions; and pay a pension in case of death to his widow and children. I attended several of their fêtes, at which the Foresters, Odd Fellows, and Shepherds assembled. The theatrical and romantic dresses of the Foresters, the rich scarfs of the Odd Fellows, the crooks of the Shepherds, the pomp of the procession, the flags and the banners displayed, on which could be read, "Good faith," "Friendship," "We support the widow and orphan:" all this composed a touching scene, which ended with a dinner at a pleasure garden or the Crystal Palace.

The number of these working freemasonries now existing in England and Wales is estimated at twenty thousand: the number of affiliated members exceeds two millions, and the money subscribed is rather more than nine million pounds. The powerful personality of the English character, which might otherwise degenerate into egotism, is corrected by these associations, which maintain family ties among the working classes.

In some cases the taverns add to their special pleasures more frivolous subjects of attraction. Thus, Baron Nicholson presides each evening at the Cider Cellars, in all the dignity of his double

chin, his official robes, and his white wig: he calls the accused and the witnesses to the bar of his tribunal, assisted by a numerous jury. These are scenes of private life tolerably amusing, but to which a father would not take his son. I will not allude here to the concert or dancing-rooms, which several London taverns have recently opened; but which more or less change the character of these establishments.

On leaving a public-house in the larger towns the reader will be glad to shake off this atmosphere laden with smoke, noise, dust, and too often with bad language, to rest his eyes on a modest village inn.

Near a pond in which geese are flapping, or ducks diving, stands an old house, over which a vine twines its vigorous arms. This tree is happy and does not regret its native country. A trough, ever full, invites the horses to rest, and dip their thirsty mouths in the sparkling water. A rusty sign, hanging from an iron rod, allows you to guess a portrait half effaced by rain. Here everything breathes the calmness, and—may I use the expression?—the good conscience of the house. The interior is clean, tidy, and merry: an entrance-hall with the pewter pots arranged along a plank fastened to the wall, and to which a vigilant hand has given the lustre of silver; a parlour with whitewashed walls, a floor gilded with

fine sand, wooden benches and tables, an old clock which enlivens the room with a monotonous tic-tac, engravings representing historical scenes or the likeness of Wellington, an old chimney in which coals crackle and the cricket sings, windows in which an unknown hand has engraved a motto on the glass. From these windows you can see the church, the gravestones, the school round which the children buzz, and the common on which they sport.

The public-house keeps up in English villages the social link between men separated during the greater part of the day in the solitude of the fields. They meet at night to talk about wheat, hops, and races: a few innocent games of chance, or raffles, occupy the leisure hours, to the great amusement of these simple and hard-working men, who laugh at trifles. The severe uniformity of rustic toil renders them sensible to the minor pleasures of life: is it not to the night that we are indebted for a sight of the stars? One or two village politicians bring news older than the hostess's ale, as Goldsmith says. Still, this petty trade provides a livelihood for a family, or a widow whose lads cultivate the fields during the day. Here the harvest-home is kept up with crowns of wheat-ears, songs, and pots of beer. Excepting on Saturday night, the lamp is put out at an early hour; but with the dawn is heard the voice of the carter, who has slept in the only vacant

bed of the house, and is now cleaning down his horses.

Regarded as a branch of trade and an inseparable element of English manners, beer no less deserves attention than the interests of state with which historians occupy themselves. Great events only appear at rare intervals in the existence of a people, while economic facts are daily renewed, embrace their whole life, engrave the principal features of the national character, and found that material comfort by the aid of which civilised nations dispute afloat and ashore the crown of the universe.

CHAPTER XIV.

ECCENTRIC TRADES — SYMPATHY OF ENGLISH POETS FOR NOMADIC ARTISTS — GENERAL CHARACTER OF LONDON STREET-MUSIC — THE POET OF POPULAR BALLADS — THE BALLAD-SINGER — LOW LODGING-HOUSES — PERAMBULATING NUISANCES — THE SCOTCH BARDS — THE WAITS — DON JUAN DE VEGA.

THE celebrated Doctor Pritchard has divided the human race into three branches—the settled races, the semi-wandering, and the nomadic; all of which modes of life will be found in the bosom of that great civilisation we are now studying. By the side of those sedentary trades which contribute to the wealth and moral splendour of a state there are others which we will term eccentric; among the latter, some limit their perpetual migrations to the suburbs, or even districts, of populous towns, while others, on the contrary, lead an entirely nomadic life, running from hamlet to hamlet, and from city to city. This division is founded on the habits, perhaps even on the intellectual and moral development, of the various civilised tribes. These eccentric trades occupy,

and that justly so, an inferior rank; but they are distinguished by strongly marked features, special manners, and a peculiar mode of life.

Nothing is small, nothing is ridiculous, which procures a man the means of living, and the English, as thorough practical economists, become serious so soon as you talk to them about money-making. I will not say that they profess any great esteem for those trades which give rise to the vagabond classes, but they frankly admit the division of labour, and as all the world must live somehow, they do not condemn any trade in principle, they only repress illicit practices.

English poets and romance writers have, at all times, but especially in later years, evinced a lively sympathy for the lower classes, whose profession is attached, by very subterraneous roots, it is true, to the great tree of the liberal arts. What has principally attracted the *fantaisistes* of London, and attracts myself, though from a different point of view, to study an interesting social family, is the fact that this numerous race is condemned to disappear ere long. Grafted on the old geography of towns, and the institution of English fairs, it is decaying with the stage of its ancient popularity.

The eccentric trades of England may be divided into three branches—the street musicians, the showmen,* and the strolling players. The life

* It is impossible to give the French equivalent of this word. The

of these Saxon Bohemians offers a sum total of facts but little known and most attractive to the observer; for it is, before all, in the exceptional classes that the characteristics of a nation are revealed and engraved with the greatest vigour.

London is the city of contrasts: by the side of extreme misery stand forth riches, luxury, and all the marvellous splendour of trade; gloomy lanes, filled with brick hovels, open out on wide streets, where the houses become palaces; and in the vicinity of the choked-up districts extend immense parks, rightly named the lungs of London, for the city breathes through this web of foliage. In the heart of this great Babel there is room for all noises, all theatres, all amusements, from the most refined down to the most simple. At nine in the morning, when the crowd begins spreading over the streets, like a tide, the great army of singers and wandering minstrels advance from Spitalfields, Leather-lane, Wapping, and Clerkenwell, upon the West-end. You may then find beneath the walls of the great theatres a white-haired Paganini, who has played the same air on the same string through half a century.

I will not say that the street-music, often more noisy than melodious, is an amusement for every-

English language always affirms the human personality, as in Englishman, alderman, showman, &c. The individual—and that is one of the features of the Anglo-Saxon race—never disappears under the nationality or the social condition.—*Original note.*

body. Hogarth, that great painter of manners, has represented to us the tribulations of the enraged musician. Things have slightly changed since then, I am happy to say, although London cries would have to alter greatly ere they pleased delicate ears; but, then, everybody is not Dr. Arne. As society is based on an exchange of concessions, the repose of some must be sacrificed to the utility of trade or the pleasures of the greater number. What is Hades to the dilettante or the student, is paradise to servant-girls and nurses who want to learn a tune to send baby to sleep. More than one English girl hears at her window the echo of her dreams in the passing melodies.

And, then, let us not be too severe towards what the English call, with some sweetness, street minstrelsy. The execution, I confess, is not always irreproachable; but of what consequence is that, when sounds are crushed by the thundering wheels of passing vehicles, or the thud of the pavior's rammer? This open air amusement is distinguished by other qualities which it would be unjust not to recognise: it is accessible to all, and costs nothing—it is the opera, the concert of the poor man. And, besides, the London street music responds to those harmonies which are in the human soul, but above all to those chords which it is easy to make vibrate in the Englishman's heart—tradition, family, and country.

From time to time this nomadic music is composed of old airs and ballads, sung by the grandams of the present generation: "A cobbler there was and he lived in a stall"—"the Cock-lane Ghost"—"the Children in the Wood"—"Barbara Allen." The voice of the singer, exposed to the breeze, often reminds the passer-by of the trembling voice of his grandmother, tried as it was by the winter of years. At other times, these airs belong to different provinces of the United Kingdom. To the Britons of Wales, they speak of the mountains; to the Irish, of the lakes of Green Erin; to the lowland English, they recal the furze, the damp commons, and the Will-o'-the-wisp, that spirit of the night which in childhood they saw running over the surface of the marshes. There are others which are national songs, hymns of victory or mourning, such as "The Death of Nelson," "Britannia, the Pride of the Ocean," or "The Red Cross Banner." The wandering minstrels know their ground, too: in the port of London they strike up tunes whose words and air refer to the life of a sailor, such as "Wapping Old Stairs," or "Poor Joe the Marine." We can easily guess that love, the great mine of the human heart, is also at work in these popular romances—take, for instance, "Annie Laurie" and "Kate Kearney."

As London serves as the gathering place for all the peoples and races of the earth, the street

music reflects that cosmopolitan character. You see there Indians singing something in Hindoo and beating the tom-tom, a monotonous instrument, whose dull sadness, however, expresses a longing for an absent country; but I must grant that they have fallen into discredit since the Indian mutiny. Chinese strum the chords of a sort of mandoline, and recite in a quavering voice an air as strange as the words. Lastly, Ethiopians, known by the name of Serenaders, play the tambourine and banjo, though truth compels to add, that all they have in common with the negro is his colour, and that they owe to a mixture of grease and lampblack.

Singing and music in the streets of London and all the large English towns constitute, as may be seen, a branch of trade, by which many earn a livelihood, and whose origin deserves to be known.

The street musicians and singers descend in a direct line from the ancient minstrels. In England these were nearly all Normans, even for several centuries after the conquest; and they enjoyed great esteem and considerable privileges. The gates of castles and rich monasteries were open to them as to heralds or ambassadors, and we read in the history of Oxfordshire, that two travellers went one night to the gate of an abbey, and were received by the monks who at first took them for minstrels; but the manciple, the sacristan, and

some other brothers, perceiving that they were only poor priests, beat, and turned them out.

As the services of the minstrels were amply requited, the profits they derived from their art induced a great number of idlers and adventurers to enter their fraternity. These intruders speedily dishonoured the profession; at the castles and monasteries, whither they proceeded in large bands, especially on the occasion of certain festivals, they were not always contented with their host's liberality, but treated cellar, larder, and the whole house like a conquered country. These abuses provoked unfavourable edicts against the brethren of the gay science, signed by Edward the Second and Henry the Fourth.

The condition of these musicians, formerly so flourishing, declined from century to century in the estimation of the English. In the reign of Elizabeth, another cause of decadence was the development of literature, which occurred in the gilded regions of British society, and to which the minstrelsy remained strangers. Their profession was at that time so degraded, that we find in a penal statute of that queen the minstrels classified with vagabonds and beggars. Cromwell, during his protectorate, treated with the same contempt and severity "those people commonly called violin players and minstrels." The trade was kept up in spite of public decrees; but the noble minstrels had descended from the castle to the tavern or

the street. We now see them displaying in London streets the shadow of a dead prosperity and an extinct grandeur, for the open-air musicians and singers form—though little suspecting it—the relics of a fallen caste, formerly esteemed and powerful.

The functions of the poet, singer, and musician are now at times found combined in the modern minstrel, as they were formerly in the ancient trouvère; but most frequently these branches of the fine art are distinct. There are three classes of persons attached to street music, the authors, the singers, and the players; and the dignity of the subject commands that I should treat of the authors first, who are the real descendants of the old Norman rimours.

The modern writers who labour for the streets, constitute a separate class in the literary Bohemia. The two styles of poetry they cultivate with most success are the ballad and the sorrowful lamentation. If we may believe some English writers, the ballad is of British origin; it cannot be denied, at any rate, that it is one of the oldest and most popular memorials of their literature. The street author is paid a shilling for each song; but if the publisher is very pleased with the verses or their sale, he may add at times a few pence to the stipulated price. A few years ago, the street-ballad was a source of considerable gain to the publishers and printers, but at present it is in a state of de-

cadence. The street poets accuse the singing-rooms, at present so numerous in all the large towns of Great Britain, of having spoiled their trade. The publisher no longer needs to have recourse to their services; he finds it more simple to buy a collection of ready-made songs and select those which suit him best, being careful to print at the head of the fly-sheet the words so detested by the street author, but acceptable to the public, "Sung at the London Concerts." The demand for songs written expressly for the streets having grown very limited recently, the number of poets who lived by this special branch has sensibly diminished; indeed, there were only six left in 1852.

They write on every subject, and their vein is inexhaustible; wars, victories, political events, love, all the motives which made the harp of the ancient minstrels vibrate, still inspire the popular rhymer. Still, his favourite subject is satire. Of course, we must not expect in these songs which run the streets a specimen of English literature; but you find here and there coarse traits of wit, which in the eyes of the moralists go to fill up the physiognomy of the national character. The street poet evidences a great fecundity; but he finds a difficulty in disposing of his wares; he can only sell to publishers two or three songs a week, bringing in the same number of shillings. His condition is, consequently, the saddest and most

wretched of all those that contribute to the delight of the working classes and servant-girls. Most of these authors add a petty trade to their profession, and generally a vagabond one, such as a tinker or match-seller. The great ambition (and who has not his?) of the poet who has never signed his name at the foot of his songs, is to have an epitaph in verse, written by himself, engraved on his tombstone; but to do that he wants a stone, and where is the hope that this poor rhymer can ever procure it, save in his dreams? His epitaph, though written with religious care, is fated to remain, and he regrets it deeply, the only one of his unpublished works.

The written song would be a dead letter, did not another trade undertake to give it air, movement, and life: I allude to the street singer. At times the latter accompanies himself on the fiddle; frequently the characters are divided; the husband plays, and the wife sings. There is, however, a great number of solitary singers, whose principal profit consists in selling ballads they have just sung. Although this perambulating artist, so well known in the suburbs of London, lends his voice to all, past glories and misfortunes, he most affections events of the moment. When the political horizon is loaded with clouds and big with eventualities, he hopes that the storm will descend for him on the pavement in a shower of coppers. All that agitates popular passions increases the

importance of his functions; thus, a few years back, during the great uprising against Papacy, the street singer became all at once a personage. He had, it is true, serious fights to endure in the streets with the Irish; he received kicks, but he picked up here and there sixpences and even shillings, which fell at the sound of his satirical verses against the Pope and Cardinal Wiseman. For the first time he saw clergymen hold out their hands to the poor street singer and declare themselves his patrons. This glory and prosperity lasted so long as momentary excitements can last with a free people; the street singer is a philosopher and had foreseen these vicissitudes of fortune, so he returned to his violin. He played a few airs, while awaiting a new movement of the tide, I would say of public opinion. Another source of gain was the arrival of Haynau in England; this time the street singer addressed himself specially to women, and they are his best customers. He is always sure of an abundant harvest of coppers when, by the aid of his air and words, he can succeed in touching the sensitive portion of his audience. All festivals and public ceremonies also supply the street singer with a pretext for exercising his vocalist talent; I was in London on the occasion of the marriage of the Princess Royal, and the street echoes repeated, in coarse verses, at times even cynical, the news of the event. Licentiousness was the salient point in the old poetry

sung by the minstrels, and this character is not effaced among the modern street troubadours. The profession of the street singers is subject to no censure or prohibition, for the British Government is of Mazarin's opinion, and lets them sing on. Does it not, besides, feel strong enough to tolerate a trade, which under a form sometimes disrespectful, in no case conceals any animosity, to the institutions of the country or the reigning family?

There is also another *terrain* on which the services of street singers are often accepted, even hired—that of elections. Bedizened with the political colours under which he is enlisted, armed with his fiddle and a ballad in favour of one of the candidates, he bravely enters the lists. We can assume that the adversary of his patron is spared no satire; but though he supports with all his influence the success of the cause he has espoused, the street singer really feels no sympathy for either side—his violin and voice are at the service of anybody who pays.

The street singer, being one of the most eccentric figures in the English population, I was anxious to learn his mode of life. You are always sure to find him in one of three places—the street, the public-house, or the low lodging-house. During the day the street is his stage, where he sings, plays, and disposes of his wares. In the public-house, which he frequently enters to clear his

throat, he takes his place at the bar or in the tap-room; if the company of drinkers be numerous and in good humour, he easily finds means to sell a few ballads by regaling the ears with a little music. In short, he often gains more money than an ordinary workman will: but his profits are variable, and this uncertainty explains the irregularity of his manners. He has, besides, artistic tastes, that is to say, an inclination for dissipation and liberty. The nature of his perambulating trade, and, still more, his vagabond humour, lead him to despise a home. There are, I grant, a few street singers who live with their families in the poorer houses of London and other cities, but the majority of them lodge for the night in strange and gloomy dens. Whoever has attentively visited the populous and characteristic quarters of London, will have noticed these words in manuscript, or printed on a bill, "Good beds—plenty of hot water—gas all night." The house that bears this inscription does not at all differ from its neighbours, save, perchance, by a look of wretchedness and uncleanliness. At times, however, it may be recognised by another sign: the windows, often level with the pavement, have more paper than squares of glass in them, for it is an admitted principle among these establishments that windows are made, not to give passage to light, but to keep out cold air.

There are two classes of low lodging-houses: in

the first place, there are the thoroughly low houses, which deserve the title from two points of view, and over those we will let a veil fall. English and French writers, who have loaded with gloomy colours a picture already too gloomy in itself, have described—I am happy to say so—rather the history of old than of modern London. There still are some lodging-houses of the old style left, but these houses are becoming daily rarer: some have been pulled down, others rebuilt and improved, especially since the Act of 1851, which brought the common lodging-houses under the *surveillance* of the police.

As a type of the night-lodgings on the old system, I will choose the Farm-house in the Mint, which has, however, lost much of its notoriety and importance during the last few years. Tradition has it that this house once belonged to Cardinal Wolsey, and, at a later date, to Queen Anne. Buildings have their destinies, and this one has retained nothing evidencing an old royal residence; it keeps aloof from trodden paths, and seems to have sunk into the ground in order to hide its misfortunes. It is so low, or, at least, so perfectly surrounded by houses, that you must enter the yard before you can notice it. In this house there are sixty beds, and three kitchens which have seen better days; the largest of these kitchens, detached from the sleeping rooms, is the only one in which food is prepared, the other two

being devoted to sundry purposes; in one, divine service is sometimes performed on Sundays. Here, as in most lodging-houses, each boarder for the night is his own cook. In the yard is a washhouse built a few years back, and the yard is also used to dry the clothes washed by the hands of the lodgers. Here the sight of wretchedness may, perhaps, be painful, but there is nothing revolting about it; unfortunately, most of the travellers' lodgings are far from offering this character of order and cleanliness. There are some in which noise, confusion, and filth, impossible to describe, prevail, where the livid and tottering walls badly shelter faces more livid than themselves, where people stifle in summer and freeze in winter. A traveller has described how he slept, a few years back, not far from Drury-lane, in a room whose ceiling consisted of slates, which, removed by the wind, allowed the stars to be counted through them.

The persons who frequent these lodging-houses are very mingled, but are chiefly recruited among the wandering trades; the men collect in these establishments in virtue of the chemical law, *similia similibus*. Those whose occupations and manners present features of analogy during the day, collect at night beneath the same roof. I will not assert that the street singer, though relatively better educated than the other individuals of the nomadic class, always selects the common

lodging-houses of better character; he sleeps anywhere, and often in the most obscure dens. For it may be remarked here that the degree, more or less inferior, of these houses, does not always coincide with the character and the social condition of those who frequent them. Men who have received an education, who have held a certain position in the world, but whom reverses of fortune or a dissipated life have plunged into misery, often frequent the worst places; like the rock detached from the mountain, and which does not stop in its fall, they voluntarily roll to the bottom of the abyss.

The interior of these houses, except in certain cases and quarters, does not offer those tumultuous scenes which might be anticipated from the assembly of men so noisy in the streets and highways: the prevailing character of this wandering fraternity, on the contrary, is silence. Some smoke, some sleep, while others prepare their supper. The street singer, on entering these lodgings, puts off his jovial character and loquacity: his merriment was a mask. Everybody collects round the chimney, for these men, exposed during the whole day to the changeable weather of the streets, desire heat before all else. The taciturn expression of their faces struck me, but I was more astonished at finding in most of the lodging-houses I visited, at least one news-

paper. Some of the best of these establishments have even libraries of four and five hundred volumes.

Most English moralists consider, and rightly so, the majority of the low lodging-houses schools of vice and sinks of iniquity; some of them have even seen in the existence of these houses an invincible obstacle to the development and amelioration of the poorer classes. The congregation of individuals in rooms deprived of air; the confusion of sexes, at least in the kitchens; the bad examples and lessons, assuredly exercise a pernicious influence on the health and morals of the travellers. In these nests of nocturnal cohabitation you find girls of fifteen, and children separated from their families, and huddled pell-mell. The suppression of such houses would be a measure incompatible with the English notions about the right of property and individual liberty, so that cannot be thought of. All that could be done would be to oppose to them night refuges, where the poor would obtain notable advantages. British charity has already entered on this path, but there are obstacles to be overcome, and one of them is the chain of habits. The street singer, and I have him chiefly in view, has no worse morals than his brethren of the other erratic trades; but he is inclined to regard the necessary discipline prevailing in the model lodging-houses as a sort of serfdom. The foundation of his character is in-

dependence, and provided he can sing by day, he can always find a bed at night, caring little about the nature of the nest, like a certain class of our harmonious birds.

Between the street singer and the musician, properly so called, the same difference exists as formerly between the chanters and the instrumentalist minstrels, who, according to Strutt, represented, in the houses of the wealthy mediævalists, the opera or concert orchestra. At present, however, they are separated, and each goes his own road.

The street music of London is chiefly composed of players on the harp, guitar, flute, cornet-à-piston, and other brass instruments. I will not allude here to the organ-grinders, for they are all, or nearly all, foreigners. These are solitary musicians, who traverse the town and country. I several times met with sorrow, in Pimlico, a poor young man, of about twenty years of age, playing a species of hurdy-gurdy which had not a note left: this melancholy and monotonous noise is only too thoroughly in harmony with the mind of the musician, for he is an idiot. But most generally the perambulating musicians go about in bands, often rather numerous. These bands are either German or English.

They must not be confounded, however, with the itinerant musicians who go about the country and towns of the United Kingdom. The real

perambulating musicians never leave London, unless sometimes during summer for a trip to the sea-coast or elsewhere; and the regularity of their work is a singular feature in the life of these semi-nomadic musicians. They have divided London into several districts, and will not allow other bands to poach on their manor. Their journeys are hence not only limited, but regulated, and they have their days, almost their hours, for visiting the different streets of their musical department. No one knows the town like them, or at least the quarters of town they work. I have seen them more than once enter the most entangled labyrinth of streets, poor and solitary lanes, gloomy courts, narrow alleys and passages, unknown even to the inhabitants of London. They know the walls that have ears and those that have none; they also remember the airs suitable to each district, each street, and often enough each house. Generally, they seek quiet parts, and profit by those hours of the day when the working population of the district enjoys a moment of leisure. Their greatest enemy is the school or factory bell, which, when rung in the middle of their concert, carries off the best part of their audience. As a general rule, they are decently dressed, and are distinguished by their manners from the common street singer, with whom, perhaps, they have only one connecting link, the love of liquor, for it

is an axiom with them that brass is productive of thirst.

Though less affected in their trade than the poet of popular songs, the street musicians complain bitterly of the spread of music-halls. "These concerts," one of them said to me, "rob us of our bread. Amateurs are becoming every year more difficult to please. There is not a London street idler who would now-a-days stop five minutes to hear St. Dunstan himself playing his organ; for, as you are of course aware, that saint was a perambulating musician like us, and invented with his own hands an instrument which is the parent of the present barrel organ."

The majority of these musicians—as, indeed, all the wandering or semi-wandering classes—evince a great indifference in matters of religion; still there are curious exceptions. I knew, three years ago, in Wapping, a Scotch workman, who, unable to support his children by his toil, had several times the notion of sending them to play in the streets. The Scotch bard is a speciality; his theatrical costume, the rude originality of his national air, the hoarse but primitive sound of his bagpipes, all attract the eyes and ears of passers-by to him. And then, again, there is not a street, especially in the old parts of London, where you do not find at least one Scotch family. To a true Caledonian heart these airs are worth more than the finest operatic music. They are the

echo of the mountain, the voice of the country. The idea, therefore, appeared to the poor family like a dream of fortune; but the father struggled and resisted for a long time. A stern Presbyterian, he feared, and justly so, the evil influence of the street on his two children—a lad of twelve and a girl of seven. Circumstances, however, proved stronger than his will, and the experiment was decided on. The mother, who was to accompany them, took from an old chest two Highland dresses. The boy was to play the bagpipes and his sister dance the Highland fling. When the toilet preparations were completed, the father gravely opened an old Bible, read a chapter aloud, gave his wife and children some excellent advice, and then turned to wipe away a tear. The young itinerant musician and the little dancer traversed a great part of Southern England, and even went to Jersey. I do not know whether it was in consequence of the father's fervent blessings, but the mother and children returned, six months later, with a decently filled purse, which arrived very opportunely, for the poor man had been for six weeks confined to his bed.

One of the most curious excursions in which the itinerant musicians indulge was undertaken a few years back by a young gentleman of London. He belonged to a good family, and was well educated, but a disappointment having occurred in his domestic affairs, he resolved, through one of

those eccentricities peculiar to the English character, to try the part of a wandering minstrel. He spoke Spanish very fluently, and this circumstance determined the part he intended to play. Having told his family that he was going for a tour on the Continent, he went to a London Jew, bought a cloak and a pair of breeches in the Castilian style, changed his name into Don Juan de Vega, and furnished with a ballad one of his friends wrote for the affair—the *Spanish Exile*—he set out boldly. Spanish exiles were at that time in favour with the British, and the improvised minstrel found he would add to his prospects of success by giving himself out as a victim of the civil wars. His face aided the species of romance of which he was about to be the hero: he had black eyes and moustache, a slightly bronzed complexion, and a haughty demeanour. His principal object in playing the part of a Spanish minstrel was to see England, its scenery, manners, and the different classes of society. He went first to Rochester, whence he visited the whole of Kent, going from town to town, village to village, singing and playing the guitar in the streets. His youth, his voice, his dress, before all, his misfortunes, rendered him interesting, and he picked up at times, in a shower of silver and coppers, as much as eight shillings in a few hours.

Still, all was not rose-coloured in the life of the

wandering troubadour: after fine weather comes rain; after abundance, want. The young adventurer supported the fatigues, vicissitudes, and annoyances of his new life with really British perseverance; thanks to his disguise, he introduced himself into tap-rooms, shops, and even drawing-rooms. More than one melancholy dame signalled him to come and charm away with his guitar beneath her window, nay, in her room, the weariness of a country life. On his way he formed the acquaintance of Irishmen, itinerant tailors, gipsies, sailors, and beggars. Twice or thrice he dined at the sumptuous mess of English officers, having given himself out as an ex-Spanish officer in the revolution. On foot or in poor vehicles, he traversed five or six counties of England, Wales, Ireland, and Scotland. In order to play his fictitious character the better, he pretended to understand English but very slightly, and affected to speak it very badly. His great fear always was being recognised; thus, in one of the houses to which he was called, a very pretty girl examined his guitar, touched the strings with her fingers, and said smilingly, that she should much like to play on that instrument. The disguised gentleman had a furious desire to risk a few gallant words, or at any rate, some looks; but the very austere glance of an officer who was in the room and whom the false Don Juan de Vega had known in London, soon recalled him, despite himself, to the humility

of his character. In this minstrel life, love adventures were not absent, as may be supposed, but they were the amours of a bird of passage; delicate hands made him presents of ruffles and articles suited for a Spaniard, interesting souvenirs which, in bad days, he was sometimes forced to pawn.

At Dublin he gave a concert in the theatre; in Scotland he visited, incog., the ruins of an old castle which had belonged to his family. The Scotch are suspicious as regards strangers, and hence the poor wandering minstrel often rapped in vain for shelter at the doors of houses which belonged to his own father. One of the tenants, to whom he revealed himself, asked him with some alarm if he had not a bee in his bonnet. Ten months had elapsed since Don Juan de Vega began his romantic career, and it was time to put an end to it, for the habit of speaking bad English made him almost forget his mother tongue. Hence he became again the person he was by birth, Mr. Charles Cochrane, though not without regretting, at least at the outset, the life and costume of the minstrel: he felt tortured in the fashionable cravat and clothes. Don Juan de Vega had collected during his tour through Great Britain and Ireland fifty-eight pounds, which he handed over to the Committee of the Spanish Refugees, for that was the only way he could redeem any indelicacy there might be in assuming a false position. Mr.

Cochrane also brought back from his trip something better than pounds sterling: he had learned to sympathise with that social wretchedness of which he had hitherto been ignorant. To study the poorer classes thoroughly, you must either be or become poor yourself. The lesson was not lost: Mr. Cochrane afterwards married a wealthy lady and turned philanthropist; several useful institutions are due to him, among them the street orderlies, who help to clean London streets.

By the side of the professions living by singing and music, there are others which also employ certain instruments more or less harmonious, more or less noisy, but only as a means to attract the public, for their object is to show something. We here enter on a new scene held by the great family of showmen.

CHAPTER XV.

PUNCH AND JUDY—HISTORY OF MARIONETTES IN ENGLAND—ORIGIN, BIOGRAPHY, AND CHARACTER OF MR. PUNCH—AN OLD MAN'S OPINION ABOUT OPEN-AIR THEATRES—THE LIFE OF THE PUPPET-SHOWMAN—BARNUM—THE NEGRO SISTERS—THE LIFE OF PRINCE MILLER—RICHARDSON—WOMBWELL—CHARACTER AND LIFE OF THE SHOWMAN—FATE OF THE PEOPLE SHOWN.

ONE day as I was going up the Strand, I saw under a porch supported by four pillars and leading to a lane called Clement's-passage, a puppet-show just deposited on the ground. The spot was well chosen for a representation of this nature, for it was sheltered from noise and the movement of vehicles. A man very poorly clad, wearing a hat that had once been white, and cravated with Pandean pipes, was blowing that instrument and simultaneously beating a drum with both hands. The effect of this signal was magical; just as the sound of bronze, so Virgil tells us, collects the vagabond boy, so at the first signal of the pipes and the first blow on the drum, swarms of children flocked up, emerging from every corner of the street, and

collected round the theatre which was still closed. When the curtain rose, Mr. Punch came forward and delivered a prologue, which was warmly applauded, judging by the pence that rattled into a saucer. I had before me two interesting sights, the puppets and the mob. All eyes were magnetically fixed on these wooden men, who came in one after the other, gesticulated, conversed, and nearly always ended by thrashing each other. A thoroughly British-sounding laugh ran round the circle of spectators, on whose faces could be read delight, surprise, and approval.

I noticed among them an old man with white hair and intelligent face, who seemed to take a peculiar interest in the dialogue of the actors and the incidents of the drama. Punch came forward to thrash his wife, and, delighted with his victory, sang in a loud voice the pleasures of a widower's life, when Judy's ghost appeared in a corner of the theatre, slowly advanced, and gave the insolent and hardened sinner a tremendous box on the ears. Stunned by the blow, frightened at seeing his wife again, Punch bolted; but the spectre pursued him. There was a furious and fantastic chase, at the end of which Punch, exhausted, terrified, and conquered, fell lifeless on the proscenium. A constable came and notified the death, the curtain fell somewhat sharply on this theatrical effect, and a slight murmur ran along the spectators as they dispersed.

The old man came up to me and said, "That is a perfectly novel termination; but it will not be a success."

It is rare for a gentleman to address a stranger in the street, and I attributed it to the necessity the old man felt for explaining his immoderate laughter during the performance, which he had seen that I noticed.

"You are perhaps surprised," he went on, "that a man of my age takes an interest in such amusements. What would you? I have a weakness for this perambulating theatre, which adds new points of view to street sights and peculiarities to the concert of London cries. I like Punch's voice. I like those shrill squeaks which I have heard so many times, and which delighted me so much in childhood. It is a sound which to my mind harmonises as well with the movement of the great city, as does the note of the cuckoo in spring with the joyous silence of the valleys and the fresh verdure of the woods. I am not the only one who takes pleasure in the tragic adventures of Punch and Judy; I know artists, literary men, and two M.P.s, who readily stop as I do before the open-air theatre. We English are simpler than we look, and are amused with a trifle. You must have perceived this, if you have remarked the crowd of people of all ages and conditions who, on a fine summer's day, collect round these wooden actors, animated by the invisible hand of

the puppet-showman. One of my friends, a philosopher and man of the world, passes amusing evenings in playing the drama of Punch and Judy before his family and a select circle of connoisseurs. As for the street puppet-showmen, there is as much difference between them, I mean with respect to talent, as among the actors of our great theatres. The one you have just heard is mediocre; but I knew one many years ago who was a great man in his line. Believe me, I have been present at many dramatic performances; I have seen the stars of the British stage: the two Keans, Charles Young, Kemble, Macready. Well, either the impressions of youth ever remain the most faithful, or the showman was really a skilful actor; but I never felt so affected in my life as before his puppet-show; and hence, probably, comes my liking for this style of sight. And then, again, I am of Oliver Goldsmith's opinion, and like to see smiling faces around me. Punch and Judy is the theatre of the poorer classes and children: the poor man owes to it his hours of recreation and forgetfulness of his woes. The puppet-showman is himself a type; his ambition—surely it is an innocent one—is to amuse. Do not fancy he is insensible to the effect he produces on his audience; he has his self-esteem, and is delighted to cause pleasure to others. For my part, I feel greater satisfaction in applauding a puppet-showman or a strolling player than a great tragedian, for the

latter can do nothing with my expressions of enthusiasm, which are lost in the tumult of the theatre, while the former finds in them a source of encouragement. If ever you desire to form the acquaintance of a puppet-showman, do not be sparing of your praise, for there is never any harm in flattering the wretched."

Under a simple exterior, this old man was well informed, and I obtained from him an account of the history of marionettes in England, the origin, biography, and character of Punch, and the life of the puppet-showman.

Puppets have played, from time immemorial, a great part in the amusements of the English, and, I might almost venture to say, in their literature. The grave Dr. Johnson went so far as to say that puppets might perform Shakspeare's pieces just as well as living actors, and there is no paradox in this, for, in 1797, a Mr. Henry Rowe played "Macbeth" with wooden figures, and recited himself the dialogue belonging to each character. He died in 1800, and, as he hailed from York, he was surnamed the York Trumpeter. During his life he published an edition of "Macbeth," with notes and corrections. Southey, in his "Doctor," also tells us that the town of Ingleton acquired, about a hundred years ago, a great celebrity through being selected as head-quarters of Rowland Dixon, the *gesticulator maximus*, and his puppets; the latter were of life size, and a vehicle

compared with Noah's Ark was employed to transport them from one town to the other. All English writers, it must be allowed, have not been so favourable to these dramatic representations, the actors in which ceased to live on returning to the wings, and comic authors have even spoken with contempt of the motions; but, be it remembered, it was professional jealousy on their part, for the pieces played by the puppets in past days offered a very dangerous rivalry to those represented by flesh-and-blood actors. The proprietors of theatres situated in Drury-lane and near Lincoln's Inn-fields, sent a petition to Charles II. to ask that a puppet-show theatre, established at that period on the spot where Cecil-street now stands, might be put down or removed to another part of the town. The attraction was so great that the puppet-show not only injured the material prosperity of the theatres, but even caused the churches to be deserted. Among the crowd of puppets which then defiled before the British public, Dr. Faust figured.

Of these ancient pieces, only Punch and Judy has survived. Some learned pundits will have it that the name of Punch is derived from Punchio, and that he is of Italian origin. This opinion was combated, however, by the old gentleman I met in Clement's-passage; according to him the type of Punch, such at any rate as is now represented in the London streets, is surely English.

The authors of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries make no mention of his arrival in Great Britain; but the popularity of Mr. Punch was established in the reign of Queen Anne, and no one then regarded him as a novelty or a stranger from across the seas; but these documents testify, on the contrary, that he succeeded, under a transformation, the person called Vice, who played a great part in the ancient mysteries of Great Britain. Like the clown of the modern English stage, or the *gracioso* of the Spaniards, he was a fanciful being who liked to shed over the serious parts of a drama humorous or ridiculous features. Among the "Selecta Poemata Anglorum," published by Mr. Popham, there is a copy of Latin verses in which the characteristics of Punch are graven in recognisable features, and they have scarcely altered with time. He is represented as a *homuncio*, with a comical face and immense paunch, who suddenly appears among the intrigues of the pieces; disturbs everything, utters jests in the gravest scenes, gives the girls glances which make them blush, and excites the laughter of the young men by his improper jests. His name, the author of the Latin poem adds, is Punchius.

English tradition has it, in fact, that Punch played a part in all the dramas, sacred and profane, that preceded the renaissance of letters; he is present in the piece called the "Deluge," in

which he saluted the patriarch with the expression, "Hazy weather, Master Noah!" whence a puppet-showman declared one day in my presence that the type of Punch was as old as the Deluge and as immortal as England! But the great day of our hero was the time of Steele, Addison, Gay, and Swift, who did not disdain to describe in prose, and even in verse, the marvels of the wooden dramas in which this hunchback Don Juan always played the principal part; the *Spectator* even rendered celebrated the representations of Powell, who kept a puppet theatre in London. I must, however, state that Punch was not always a mere puppet: very living and very English actors have tried more than once to play this part on the stage, especially at fairs and country theatres. After all, Punch has hitherto only needed a dramatic genius of the first order to draw him from the obscurity of the puppet-show.

There are at present a hundred ways of playing the little drama of Punch and Judy in the streets; it is a theme which lends itself to countless variations according to the talent or fancy of the showman. I should think it puerile to dwell on the incidents, but I thought it right to discover how this type of Vice enjoyed such extensive popularity in England. It is to be noticed, besides, that domestic quarrels, too often accompanied by a thrashing, have been introduced into the dramatic life of Mr. Punch at a comparatively recent

period, and in proportion as the puppet-show descended to the lower classes. Owing to his character of domestic tyrant, Punch is no favourite with the fair sex, and if you stop to look at his antics, you will find that his audience is composed of far more men than women. In spite of the bad actions of his life, Mr. Punch—and that is the reason why I dwell on him—personifies a side of the English character: strength of soul, presence of mind, and self-control. It was also from this point of view that the old gentleman, so well up to the life of the puppets, defended the dramatic personage in whom the people of London takes an interest.

"After all," he said to me, "we must not seek perfection in human nature, and it would be unjust to ask from the puppets, made after man's image, more than we do from man himself, made after the image of Deity. I do not like the way in which, actuated by jealousy or embittered by conjugal disputes, Punch throws out of window his only child, the little girl he was nursing just before so tenderly. Nor do I approve his brutal conduct to Mrs. Judy, who is most certainly a sacrificed woman; but I sympathise with him so soon as he struggles against the afflictions of life with an invincible strength of will. I applaud the mocking energy with which he braves the horror of dungeons and hears the death sentence pronounced. The mob laughs, and I laugh with

it, at the sight of the trick he employs to hang Jack Ketch himself in his own stead. The conclusion, I confess, is not very moral. After escaping human justice, the culprit also escapes divine justice; but the showman would be ruined who attempted to alter it. I have frequently seen mud thrown in London streets at the showman who, doubtless through an honourable motive, refused to allow Punch the victory over the hangman and the demon. The Punch a British public wants must have a tenacious mind, fertile in expedients to triumph over material force in the shape of a huge black dog, over illness in the form of a doctor, over death in the form of a skeleton or executioner, and over all the enemies of the human race in the shape of the devil. This results from the British character, which does not like to be beaten, even when in the wrong. It is especially in his fight with Shallaballah that I admire Punch's firmness; he who has tortured others is tortured in his turn. The gloomy demon shakes a monstrous bell in the ears of his victim, whom he persecutes in every way; but scarce has he turned his back ere Punch forgets his horrible nightmare, reassumes his jolly humour, and thunders forth in a calm voice the song of *Jim Crow*, or some other melody equally absurd. Shallaballah returns; Punch bravely holds his own against his intimate enemy, and ends by conquering him. Such

greatness of mind under adversity reconciles me with the popular myth. "Everybody living has his Shallaballah under one shape or the other, but the admirable philosophy of Mr. Punch is not accorded to all."

As the life of the puppet-showman has considerable affinity with that of the other exhibitors on the highway, I will merely note its special characteristics. The *personnel* of these perambulating representations is usually composed of two persons, one of whom carries the theatre, and disguises his voice by means of a tin squeak, while the other carries the puppet-box and blows the trumpet, or plays the drum; but, in order to play Punch and Judy with great attraction, a woman's voice and a dog—the immortal Toby—are required. The puppet-showman is a philosopher, a Diogenes; he cares very little about his personal appearance, which is usually poor and neglected. But you must put no faith in these appearances of wretchedness. In this case the profits certainly depend on voluntary contributions, but it is a more abundant source than might be supposed. The puppet-showmen often pick up from two to four shillings from each performance; hence, on summer days, when they can perform as many as ten times, these two men do not fail to obtain a very decent livelihood. When the collection is not satisfactory, they sometimes decline to perform. My old friend told me that he once saw

the curtain rise, Mr. Punch make his bow, and address his audience in these words: "I never yet played for sevenpence-ha'penny, and never shall, so good-by." And the men went their way.

The receipts, I grant, depend greatly on the skill of the puppet-showman. He must possess a certain share of wit, tact, and acquaintance with his public. The allusions to political events are most frequently favourably greeted, and this vein, if properly worked, constitutes one of the material elements of success. Some years ago, during a general election, a showman placed on the stage a candidate for Westminster who kissed Judy and her child, and then asked Mr. Punch for his vote. When the Divorce Bill, passed by the Commons, was before the House of Lords, I myself heard a showman who took advantage of Punch and Judy's conjugal disputes to support that bill. Three years back, a certain movement took place in the public opinion against the punishment of death, and another puppet-showman at once placed in Mr. Punch's mouth—an interested party in the question—certain words in favour of the abolition of the gallows. Punch and Judy's theatre becomes, on these occasions, an open-air pulpit: still, there are few puppet-showmen, I am bound to say, who rise to the elevation of public interests.

In his peripatetic life the puppet-showman eats what he finds and sleeps where he can, and his

least fault is foresight. Most generally he limits his peregrinations to the town in which he lives—I had almost said, purlieu; but sometimes a vagabond spirit drives him about the country, and even over the sea. It is recorded that Bayle more than once left his studious retreat at the sound of the trumpet which announced the arrival of English puppets in Rotterdam. A few years back Punch found his way to Calcutta, and he has been met on the western watershed of the Andes.

The other showmen may be divided into two classes: those who establish themselves, at any rate temporarily, in a town, and those who perpetually visit fairs and race-courses. The former form the aristocracy of the profession, the second the *plebs*. Among the most illustrious, Mr. Barnum takes the first rank, and he modestly christened himself the "Prince of Humbugs." Though a native of Connecticut, Mr. Barnum resided for some years in London, and gave, not long ago, lectures on the art of money-making to a numerous and brilliant audience. From whatever point he may be regarded, Mr. Barnum is certainly a type, and deserves, on that account at any rate, the attention which the whole British press granted him.

Great Britain is the classic soil of puffs, and the American Barnum might expect to meet rivals. The great art of the showman, when he has dis-

covered any novelty, true or false, consists in inventing a legend that recommends his wares to public curiosity. The least probable and most marvellous story is generally the best. A few years back two children were shown with great success throughout England, who were said to have been obtained from the mysterious cities of Central America, where they were adored as idols. They were, it was asserted, the degenerate descendants of the ancient birdmen, preserved in the temples of Iximay. The two children were deaf and dumb, and this silence was produced as a proof of their sacred character: they had never been allowed to hear a human voice. A sort of romance, illustrated with wood-cuts, even described the dangers incurred in removing them from the temple. I purposely employ the word romance, for it was an utter falsehood. The two children were certainly discovered in America, but it was in a showman's tent, where they were shown, together with a very tall pig. The pretended gods were two poor, more or less, idiotic creatures.

Another source of success consists in moving the generous feelings of the nation. Every one knows the horror the English profess for negro slavery, and how easy it is to cause the delicate chords of pity to vibrate with them on that point. Edinburgh one day received the visit of a showman, accompanied by two young negresses, whom

nature had attached together by bonds as indissoluble as those of the Siamese twins. A printed story, given away *gratis*, related the adventures of Christina and Milly Makoy (such was the name of the two sisters), their misfortunes, their painful voyage, and the sad fate of their parents. The price of admission was fixed at two shillings during the day, and one shilling in the evening. The profits of this sentimental exhibition were destined, it was added, to free from slavery the father and mother of the twins. In all this touching story the only thing wanting was truth. The two poor girls were exhibited by their master, a slave-dealer, who brought them on speculation to the land of freedom, and who, finding the affair did not pay, took them back as slaves to the New World.

In opposition to the life of an aristocratic showman, written by Mr. Barnum, and which created such a sensation in England, Mr. Miller offers us that of a vulgar showman,* and the contrast is too striking for me not to point it out. Mr. Miller was a lawyer's clerk in London, and was afterwards employed in a mercantile agency office. One day he met a party of acrobats, with whom he went to drink at a public-house. The

* This book really deserves reading. I think it was published by Mr. Lacey, of Wellington-street, and now of the Strand. I remember perusing it when it first came out with great interest. The title is "Life of a Showman, by David Prince Miller."—L. W.

next day he woke up in fearful den, a low lodging-house, with no distinct remembrance of what had happened to him, but of the eighteen sovereigns he had in his pocket on the previous evening, and which belonged to his father, he had only sixteen left. This circumstance determined him to embrace an adventurous life, for he did not dare go home. After going through various fortunes, he formed the acquaintance at Leeds of a showman who had shown, a few years previously, a black giantess, who, having married, left the profession; but her costume still remained in the corner of the tent. The showman proposed to the young man to play the part of that female, and he was obliged to acquiesce, for the prodigal son was at the end of his resources. The trumpets then announced that this great curiosity had been brought over at a great expense by a ship captain. The public flocked in; but one day an intoxicated individual tried to kiss the negress. Miller defended himself badly, and after the struggle the visitor took away a cheek almost as black as Miller's was. The audience retired from the show murmuring, but the drums beat, and a noise covers so many things. Disgusted, however, with his life, Miller desired to regain his liberty. Showman on his own account, conjuror, strolling player, he went through all the stages of the fair hierarchy, though not without meeting with bitter disap-

pointments and numerous tribulations. For a moment he was director of the Adelphi Theatre at Glasgow, and it was burnt down; he wrote for some literary publications, gave lectures, took up, left, then took up again, the trade of a showman; and, in spite of all his efforts, could never leave the abyss of misery into which a moment of weakness had hurled him. The life of Mr. Barnum is the romance of the profession; that of Mr. Miller is its history; and the stories of the rich Yankee are of a nature to produce in certain minds dangerous illusions, which I thought it my duty to destroy.

The second class of showmen, though generally poor and obscure, offers to my mind much greater interest than the first, for it fights and manfully endures the great battle of life on the field of fairs. The money expended annually in Great Britain for exhibitions forms a considerable tax raised on human curiosity, and some of these itinerant showmen are celebrities.

Every Englishman, for instance, knows the name of Richardson. When he came to London, he was a poor orphan; and after sleeping for several nights in a stable, he was hired by a publican as potboy. He was performing these humble duties when a poor old man came to the inn with a peep-show on his back; he was taken ill there and died. As Richardson had been kind to him during his illness, however, he left him all he possessed in this world, his peep-show. A few weeks

after, Richardson left his employer, to his great regret, and went to seek his fortune in the world, and thanks to his industry and frugality, soon amassed a decent amount of money. One day, as he was going through a village near London, he noticed among the crowd of lads collected round his peep-show, a child with a spotted face. The idea occurred to him that this would not be a bad speculation, so he made inquiries, and learnt that the mother of the spotted boy was a poor widow with a large family to support; he proposed to engage the living phenomenon, and offered her on the spot five guineas, with a promise to pay the same amount every three months. After a few moments' hesitation, the money was accepted, and Richardson left the village, taking with him in triumph the capture of his good or ill-fortune. He bought a caravan, and began showing the wonder of wonders; the admission was at first very modest, only a penny a head; but the show was so successful and the concourse so large, that he raised his prices to twopence, then to sixpence, and lastly to one shilling. After being with Richardson two years, the lad died of the small-pox; his owner, who had shared his bed and bread with him was deeply afflicted, and twenty years later spoke of him with tears in his eyes, for it was not the value of the boy he regretted so much as his loss. He put up a monument to him, and for a long time continued to send presents to his mother, whose pension he had doubled during the boy's life.

Richardson was a good and generous man. During St. Alban's fair, a fire broke out in the town, and Richardson, who was then owner of a portable theatre, stopped the performance, and at the head of his actors, struggled bravely with the flames to try and save the life and property of the inhabitants. The loss, however, was very great, and a subscription was opened on behalf of the sufferers, the gentlemen of St. Alban's sending their one, two, and as much as five guineas. One day a man in short black breeches, woollen stockings, and a long blue coat, walked into the office, and threw on the table one hundred guineas. "What name shall I put down?" the treasurer said. "Say a friend," the stranger replied, and walked out: but one of the persons present had recognised Richardson the *showman*, and his name figured in the list of donors. In spite of his good heart he died rich, and, as I am assured, left fifty thousand pounds to his heirs.

Another celebrity connected with fairs is Wombwell. He began by showing in London two boa-constrictors; presently, he bought a few animals, with which he travelled, and eventually he got together the most extensive and valuable zoological museum—I mean a travelling one—existing in Europe. Wombwell was, moreover, a very skilful veterinary surgeon, and on one occasion was called in by Prince Albert to cure a pack of dogs which had resisted all the efforts of science, and dis-

covered the cause of the malady in the nature of the water they drank. The Prince, in his delight, asked him what he expected in payment, and Wombwell answered, "Nothing, for I do not want for a single thing in this world." As the Prince, however, insisted, Wombwell said that if his Royal Highness was determined to make him a present, he would be glad to accept a coffin made out of the wood of the *Royal George*. This demand was acceded to, and this singular oaken article of furniture figured for some time in the showman's house, and in it the wild-beast man now reposes at Kensal Green.

The character of the fair showman offers singular features. An English poet has compared human life to a landscape, in which are found successively mountains, hills, precipices, and valleys; but of all the horizons, the one the showman most detests is a plain. He could not endure the monotony of a regular engagement, and he has a horror of a settled salary; but then, with what philosophy does he traverse this accidental existence, studded as it is with successes and reverses! He never complains when he is under a cloud, and he smiles at the first sunbeam; he likes the ups and downs of fortune. He is, I allow, more frequently down than up, but he always hopes to mount again. The indomitable confidence in the morrow animates, sustains, and encourages him, for he has so often seen, under the fickle sky of England, the

weather change from rain or snow to a bit of blue, that he builds, despite all, on a similar clearing in his own affairs. He lives on illusions, and must do so, for I am sorry to say that frequently he has no better food to grasp at; but on the field of the fair as on every other stage, the skill of the individual has a good deal to do with the prospects of success. "Success," a showman said to me, "depends less on the object shown than on the mode in which it is shown. The great sea-serpent itself would be nothing without an oral chronicle appealing to the imagination of the mob."

The showman has even two audiences he must please; that inside, and that which stops and listens or prowls round the canvas, and the great art is to keep both in good humour. The fair exhibitors are not a whit more scrupulous than their aristocratic brethren in abusing public credulity, but they have, at any rate, an excuse in their poverty. Some of them have even invented on this head a theory to set their consciences at rest: "Everybody" they say, "who enters these places expects to be cheated; and it would be, on our part, a want of respect, almost ill faith, if we spoiled the expectation of the spectator." The whole sense of the showman consists in cleverly disguising the subterfuge, for if the public consent to be duped, still they do not like to discover the fraud themselves. The truth is often the least probable thing: thus, some real savages, the Bos-

jemans, being shown for a penny at Glasgow fair, the crowd declared that they were Irish or disguised chimney-sweepers. When I reflect, moreover, on all the qualities required to make a good showman—the energy, perseverance, ready wit, and stoical courage amid the bitterest privations—I am tempted to regret that these gifts of nature are dispensed in smoke, in noise, and useless and chimerical essays. The economist must gaze with a saddened eye on all this wasted strength.

Among the virtues of the itinerant showman, there is one I must not forget, and which condones, partially at any rate, for the tricks they employ to attract the public; I mean their humanity. It frequently happens that at the same fair two or three Emperors of the Jugglers, Kings of the Albinos, or Princes of the Giants may meet, and, as may be expected, these powers wage war on each other; but, no sooner is the fair over, than the free masonic ties are reknotted among the members of this family, who are, more or less, strange to the ordinary habits of society. At such times, a lucky showman has been known to lend money to a brother in a fix, to get his stock from the obdurate railway or landlord, for an avaricious fairman is an exception.

In the vicinity of Newcastle, every body is acquainted with Billy Purvis, who is no less celebrated for his fiddling, dancing, and conjuring talents, than for his good actions and ready wit.

A widow was unable to pay her rent, and all she possessed was seized: Purvis went to her sale and bought in all the articles; and then, to the great surprise of the poor woman, he offered her all back, on the sole condition of receiving a very harmless kiss. Mr. Miller met one day on the Belford-road a poor Irishwoman with a child in her arms, and another crying to be carried: this good Samaritan thought of his own small family vagabonding about the world, and put the child on his back.

The life of the itinerant showman is a special one and sown with episodes; after walking the whole day through rain or snow, he reaches, wet through, some humble public-house. These low lodging-houses, often situated in obscure corners of villages, are generally kept by ex-acrobats, who know the visitors to fairs and races. Such a mode of living, I must confess, however, is only practised by the poorest professional travellers, for the love of home is so engraved on the heart of the Englishman, that he must have his penates, even though they are moveable. The great ambition of the showman is to have a covered vehicle, a sort of rolling box, or house, in which he feeds, sleeps, and protects his family. At times, this portable edifice is built by the showman himself, and the tumbling and clumsy appearance of the vehicle in such cases may be easily guessed. Frequently, too, these living waggons pass from hand

to hand, from generation to generation: in such cases all that is wanted is to stop the holes, paint the walls anew, and properly fit up for human beings these vehicles, which may have served to convey wild beasts. Lastly, some lucky showman possesses more elegant habitations mounted on wheels, and travel from town to town. However cheap, under certain conditions, the establishment of such a mode of locomotive may be, *non cuivis homini contingit* to procure it, while other fair travellers, who have gained that enviable position, lose it through various accidents. Besides, it is not enough to have a carriage, but there must be some sort of animal to draw it: an itinerant showman thus told me his mishaps: "Once I had a horse, but as that noble animal was too expensive to keep, I chopped it away against a pony. As the pony began to limp, I changed it away for a donkey, which died last week. Now I am afoot, but I expect to pick up at next fair." It is, however, just to say that the showman's horse or donkey conforms admirably with the frugal manners of its master, and respectable animals are generally satisfied with cropping the grass that grows on by-roads.

When the showman is married—and generally it is not good for man to be alone—his domestic lif offers a touching contrast to the excitements of a turbulent trade. The showman's wife is generally a model of order and cleanliness: a

devoted creature, who makes herself the wandering Jewess of the wandering Jew. The solid and delicate qualities that produce a happy home are so thoroughly imprinted on the character of the English woman that her roving life cannot alter them. All, even to the very knocker—for there are a door and a knocker—glistens with the rubbing of an industrious hand: the interior of these moving houses is divided into several compartments, or I may say, several rooms; there is the sitting-room, adorned with a carpet and some furniture; the bed-room, with hammocks instead of beds; the kitchen, and a work-room. The wandering showman, whose life is a perpetual tempest, needs, more than any one else, a nest where to lay his head. There he finds a table, frugal it is true, but yet laid with good taste, a fire burning in a well black-leaded grate, and children in whom their mother has inculcated good habits at an early age. Beneath these roofs lives with the showman's family, the living phenomenon he exhibits, say a giant, a dwarf, an Albino girl, or a learned pig.

The showman has at the fair, whither we must follow him, frequently to contend against the elements, nay, even against mankind. Tempestuous nights such as possibly can only be found in England, especially on the coast, more than once endanger the canvas walls he has raised with such difficulty on poles. It is not rare to see booths

completely destroyed by the wind: he is lucky, too, if no mad bull, escaping from the fair, and infuriated by the bit of red in front of his show, carries off the decorations on his horns. The children—that age is pitiless—amuse themselves by throwing stones at night against their fragile buildings, and the showman has a right to say, with the frogs in the fable, "what's sport to you is death to us." His theatre, in fact, is his sole means of subsistence; and when all else are asleep, he is compelled to watch over his tottering property.

One of them thus described his losses to me: "I formerly possessed a complete magic apparatus, a 'snow storm' and a 'sea storm.' It was a social position; but one day my implements were distrained by an inhuman landlord: my snow storm caught fire, through the awkwardness of my boy who put the candle too near it, and my sea storm was swept away by a too real tempest, which carried off the tatters even into the true sea."

The intervals between the fairs and bad weather render the showman's existence extremely precarious; when it rains, he may blow the bugle till he is blue in the face, and run about the town in quaint costume, but he will rather arouse laughter, would I could say pity, than attract public curiosity. Another very serious enemy of the showman is the preacher: at some fairs open-air preachers will distribute tracts, and try to turn the minds of the multitude to religious subjects: in some cases these bands of itinerant preachers

will hire the showman's booth for an hour or so, and begin declaiming against profane amusements. The wretched man thus seeing his livelihood menaced, is obliged to follow Santerre's plan, and order the drums to roll. In spite of troubles, privations, and reverses of fortune, this life of the itinerant showman must have something attractive about it, for most of those who take up with it persevere in it, and refuse to leave it, even when a quieter prospect is offered them.

The *personnel* of the fairs is divided into two very different classes—those who show and those who are shown. The English journals—and I am far from blaming them—have usually interested themselves in the social condition of the poor creatures who form the element of the fair exhibitions. It is certainly improper to coin money of the infirmities of our nature, but, at the same time, exaggeration must be guarded against; and a grave journal probably went too far in representing the "show" as the victim of the "showman." One of the examples appealed to, to excite British pity on behalf of these victims, was the pig-faced lady; but, as it has been discovered that her ladyship was a shaved bear, there were just reasons for keeping her in captivity. As for the giants, they are big enough to defend themselves; and as for the fat boy, or the woman weighing sixty stone, their healthy appearance speaks in favour of the diatetic regimen applied to them.

In fact, these living phenomena consider the

showman an instrument of publicity, and have no scruples about leaving him and taking another master, when the terms do not appear to them satisfactory. British fair life is, besides, full of changes, and it may happen that a giant, after having been shown for money, shows in his turn another giant or giantess. Sometimes, the exhibited live in such familiarity with the exhibitor's family, that after the savages have shown themselves in a booth, the showman's children will become savages in their turn, and continue the performance. The dwarfs might have more need of protection than the rest; but nature has provided for that by giving them a spirit of malice and an egotism peculiar to weak beings, and they manage to get their rights. If impartiality forced me to make these reservations, however, I do not the less recognise all there is painful in the life of those unfortunate victims who are shut up in stifling rolling boxes during the summer heats, and who, to satisfy the curiosity of others, see nothing themselves.

The wandering group with which we have thus formed acquaintance shows something or other. There is another family, the members of which cultivate a peculiar art or talent—they are the mountebanks, the pugilists, the conjurors, and, above all, the strolling players, who admitted me into their society, and thus enabled me to study their life.

CHAPTER XVI.

CHATHAM RACES—A MEETING IN THE CHURCHYARD—THE THEATRE AT THE FAIR—AN ACTOR'S SUPPER—THE CONJUROR—THE PUGILIST—THE ACROBAT—OPINION ABOUT SHAKSPERE—MODE TO PLAY HIS PIECES CHEAPLY—AN ACTOR'S REMARKS ON HIS PROFESSION—THE STORY OF AN ACTRESS—SOCIAL MISSION OF THE ECCENTRIC MODES OF LIVELIHOOD.

I WENT last year to Chatham races, which take place at the end of June, not to see the horses run, but because I was sure of finding there any quantity of shows and studies of manners. As the fair was not yet open, I walked about the neighbourhood, which is delightful, and stopped for a while in the churchyard. I have a liking for English country cemeteries, for they are so quiet, so grave, so full of shade and silence. The short biography inscribed on the tombstones interests me, for it is like a history of the village. On several tombs I read the same patronymic, an evident sign that the dead of a family sleep side by side. The sight of affections broken, but the tie of which is kept up in eternity, has something affecting about it, and makes me envy the lot of

those who have taken root in their natal soil. Some of these dead, before undertaking that great journey from which none return, had been to India and other distant colonies, and this fact was engraved on the stone, gnawed by moss or weather.

Day was beginning to decline, and the churchyard-keeper, an old man as grey as the tombs, was crossing the God's acre, to open the church-doors. I was about to retire, when, in the twilight, I noticed a woman seated on a grassy mound, indicating a tomb. Her head was leant on her hand, and an abundance of curling locks fell down to her shoulders. As I was concealed behind a tombstone, she could not perceive me. With a movement she made to cull a small white flower from the grass, her brown cloak opened in front, and enabled me to see, to my great surprise, black satin slippers, red stockings, and a blue silk skirt, adorned with spangles. This strange toilet formed a contrast which much piqued my curiosity, with the sadness of the spot, and the melancholy attitude of the female. She rose, wiped away a tear, and left the churchyard; and I followed, hoping at a later period to discover the secret of this sorrow associated with such strange circumstances.

As I expected, she went in the direction of the fair, where a very different scene from the one I had just left presented itself. A canvas town

was being built for two or three days only, the sound of the saw and hammer was re-echoed all around, and the hand of the architects was busily engaged in driving in stakes and erecting the scaffolding intended to serve as the skeleton of the future edifices. Already several tents and booths had been aligned so as to form regular streets. I then saw the stranger I had met in the churchyard actually mount the steps of a façade which promised to become the entrance of a theatre.

The naked hill on which the festival was being prepared, offered at this instant too animated a spectacle for me to think about going away yet. At every moment arrived new caravans and fresh portable shops: the road of the fair, like that of life, is studded with inequalities. There were the aristocrats of the profession, who arrived with their families in vehicles drawn by good horses, while a group of poor people drove before them a donkey laden with canvas and poles, on the top of which a child was seated. I walked curiously round the tents, in which candles were burning, making them resemble large Chinese lanthorns. The mass of lights, the noise and movement, contrasted with the silence of nature, and the little town of Chatham, a nest of houses in which all the windows were dark. The birds, not troubling themselves about the fair, had gone to roost, and the inhabitants slept like the birds. I saw in the moonlight the Medway, running like

a thread of silver, and the great ships with their masts standing out boldly on the horizon; but my attention was incessantly recalled to the fair. It was, to me, a new world, and I asked myself at that moment what need English travellers had to run over the world, when they had at home a race as nomadic, extraordinary, and thoroughly tattooed as the native races of Africa or South America. I knew, moreover, that the savages living in the tents—though more or less cannibal, to believe the showmen—would not eat me, and I had a great desire to form their acquaintance. Still I must defer the affair till the morrow, for all these people were now too busy to listen to a curious idle visitor.

The next day all was changed; the fair had burst forth in the night like the spring, which, in certain northern latitudes, suddenly emerges from under a veil of snow. As I walked about, I saw on the front of one of the theatres, a mad dance of men and women, among whom the actress I had seen in the churchyard was conspicuous through her smiles and the energy of her leaps. A man announced through a speaking trumpet the name of the play; the crowd rushed in, and I followed the crowd. What they played was very fair, and I regret having forgotten the title; it might be Jack Sheppard, or George Barnwell, or Jane Shore, for those are the pieces most generally played at fairs. I saw with pleasure

that the woman who had been crying on a tomb was the leading star of this band of tragedians, and, in spite of a rather hoarse voice, she had beauty, almost fashionable manners, and a germ of talent, although stifled by bad training.

After the tragedy, in the last scene of which appeared the spectres of all the people killed during the action, came a farce. The two principal characters were filled by the clown and the low comedian. The clown is what the English call a creation: with his face painted or rather daubed with red and white, and dressed in a grotesque garb, he attracts and amuses the country people at the door of the theatre; inside he makes the spectators laugh by his witticisms, tricks, and jokes as old as the dances of the actresses. We may say there is only one clown, for they are all so much alike, but the annals of dramatic art distinguish celebrities among them as Boleno, Walcot, Flexmore, and Neal. When the farce was over, a little girl of twelve, who had played Cupid in the first piece, came forward as Angel, and she was fitted admirably for both parts, for she had a pair of wings, long light hair, and plump cheeks.

All this only lasted a quarter of an hour, for the art of strolling players consists in reducing the dialogue, and talking quickly. They have been known to play Richard III. twenty times in the course of an afternoon. During the whole per-

formance, my curiosity, I confess, was much less aroused by what took place on the stage, than by the human comedy which must be played behind the scenes—I mean the life of these nomadic actors and actresses. I had certainly read the voluminous memoirs of an itinerant actor who lived at the beginning of this century, but books teach little, and I was resolved to see for myself. A very short interval separating one piece from another, I therefore lost no time, but addressed the little girl with the white wings, who alone had remained in the booth. The acquaintance was easily formed, for the angel was not averse from gingerbread nuts, and I profited by the fact to pay my addresses to her. The manager, who happened to be her father, approached me with a grave air, and I saw at once that he was mistaken as to the nature of my intentions: he doubtless thought I was an actor in search of employment. The truth is, that he had just lost a first-rate hand, a Welshman who played the part of a Frenchman, and produced great laughter in the piece, because he gave himself out as newly landed from the Continent, and unable to talk much English. The manuscript of the piece, in this agreeing with the local colouring, gave him French to speak, but as he could not pronounce a word of that language, he contented himself with talking Welsh, and the English countryfolk, equally strangers to both idioms, were always delighted. The manager had,

however, thought that there would be an advantage in utilizing the resources of a flesh and blood Frenchman, speaking in his own tongue. He therefore told me that, if the receipts came up to his expectations, as he had some reason to hope, for the weather was magnificent, a supper would be given to the actors after the races, and I was at liberty to join them. This was the entrance into a world I wished to know, and I pushed the door open. It was settled that I should sup with them, and this meeting was to be what the manager called a first step in my public career.

This said, he seized his speaking trumpet, and ran to the outer stage, whither his duties summoned him, for the whole party were performing a species of war dance there.

The races, to which I paid little attention, but which were the great affair of the farmers, who had come a long distance in handsome open carriages, ended at the close of the third day, and the festival expired with the races. The morrow, the magic of the scene had disappeared, leaving for ten months Chatham hill to silence, the solitude, and the love meetings between soldiers and servant girls. The tents were folded up, the flags struck, the booths pulled down, and the caravans set off with their baggage for another fair. It is always so with these locomotive villages: a night brought them, and a morning carries them away. The actors, with whom I was to break the bread

of friendship, had some difficulty in finding a lodging. The landlady of one public-house to whom they applied, gave them a very bad reception; her son had joined a party of strolling players, a few months before, and she detested, with her whole maternal affection, the faces of the heavy men and clowns. Other publicans, who had no sons actors, felt frightened as to the purses of these people, and the bad reputation they gave to a respectable home. At length, we discovered a rather decent hostelry, which, situated off the high road, attracted but few visitors. Here I found assembled, to my great satisfaction, not only actors, but also a pugilist, a conjuror, an acrobat, and some other individuals belonging to the numerous freemasonry of English races and fairs.

The room in which supper was laid displayed none of the splendour I had seen at the Aston Hall Exhibition, in one of Maclise's pictures, representing an actor's festival. It was a low room, the two windows of which opened on a trimly kept garden, like all the gardens in Kent, with currant bushes and cherry trees, whose fruit was beginning to turn red. The walls were hung with a painted and varnished paper, devoted to the memory of a celebrated fair held on the Thames in the winter of 1813-1814, and, among other scenes, I remarked a party of men and women roasting an ox before a fire lit on the ice.

The frugal habits of the strolling player are known to those who have read William Ryley's Memoirs, and the supper served us did not contradict that reputation. One of the utility men, the lamplighter, placed on the table sundry pots of ale, when the manager raised his glass, and said in a solemn voice, "To the absent!" I did not at once catch the meaning of this toast, but my right hand neighbour, the "old man," explained, by telling me that the party now seated around the table was not complete: they had been obliged to leave as hostages, fifteen miles from Chatham, the walking gentleman and the light comedian in the hands of a pitiless landlord. The everyday clothes of the ladies were also left in pledge, and this explained why the leading tragedian had gone to the churchyard the other night in a costume so inappropriate to the sanctity of the spot, and the sorrow then expressed on her face. The old man added, not without an air of satisfaction, that, as the receipts had been good at the races, they were going to liberate their brethren.

Up to this time, the conversation had been anything but animated; the supper scene did not at all present that disorderly talking, noise, and cross fire of sallies, described in certain English romances to strolling players. The clown himself was gloomy and sad, and I remarked on this to my left hand neighbour, the Tragic Star. "That man," she whispered to me, "has two

faces, one gay the other sad; the first belongs to other people, the second to himself. He will laugh presently to make us laugh."

A sort of genial discussion, however, presently began among the guests on the subject that interested them most, the present state of fairs in England. I will transcribe this conversation, only suppressing the low English and a few coarse jokes. A showman, whose hair was beginning to turn white, and whose forehead was marked by wrinkles, formed less by age than by exposure and the cares of a wandering life, played the part of the *laudator temporis acti.*

"Our profession," he exclaimed, "is daily declining; the public are no longer what they were in my youth. Formerly, persons who, urged by curiosity, stepped into a tent where living savages were shown, became so frightened that, after paying a penny for admission, they gladly gave twopence to be let go before the end of the performance. Now, savages may be tattooed to the teeth, and pretend to eat raw meat, and the very women are not frightened but laugh. The world has become incredulous, especially since renegades like Barnum and Miller have revealed to the profane the mysteries of the art. The veil of the temple—I should say, the canvas of the tent—has been rent."

"You are right," the conjuror said, turning over his glass as if going to perform a trick, "still it is not merely the honest curiosity that is departing,

but the fairs themselves, that noble and ancient institution of Old England, are dying out. I saw in my young days the end of Bartholomew Fair, which had existed for ages, and whose celebrity attracted heaps of strangers and country people, besides the Londoners. Not so long ago Greenwich Fair was abolished, on the pretext that it was a nest of pickpockets, and that all sorts of immoralities were committed there. I don't say the contrary, but the honourable M.P.'s might have thought that we had wives and children to support. The other fairs still existing lose their importance every year, although the authorities do not interfere. During the fine weather, the railway excursions and seaside trips offer our customers another source of amusement."

"The railways injure us," said the acrobat, "but you forget the chief cause of the public lukewarmness toward us. Now-a-days, so many magazines, papers, and cheap books are printed, that the workmen have a taste for reading, and they despise tricks. In proportion as public curiosity is withdrawn from us, talent dies out, and the profession is degraded. In our department no stars spring up, as in the golden age of fairs and exhibitions. Where could you now find a Joseph Clarke? Did you ever hear of Clarke the acrobat? In the last century, as my father told me, he was one of the glories of our country. The English are always more disposed than the inha-

bitants of other countries" (I know it, for I have travelled on the Continent) "to admire feats of strength, but most children now practice gymnastics in the schools, and some of them are so skilful that they might give us a lesson. Mind what I tell you, education is the death of us."

"Stuff!" the pugilist muttered, as he turned up his cuff and showed an herculean arm; "it is all very fine you talking, but strength will remain strength. Just look at the crowd that went to the great fight."

The old man, my neighbour, told me that the pugilist who had just spoken had himself the misfortune to kill his opponent in a fight that took place in 1853. I have but little partiality, in any cases, for violent exercises, but regarded in the light of such a tragic episode, this man terrified me. My neighbour on the left doubtless read an uncharitable feeling on my face, for she said to me:

"That man is not so bad as you imagine. He has an old weak mother he supports, and children he brings up with great care, and of whom he is very fond. After the fatal accident he sparred about the country on behalf of the widow and family of his victim. The other fighting men seconded him and helped him to repair the disaster as well as it could be, for the pugilists assist one another."

These few words reconciled me with the

human race; I saw to my shame that my feelings were partly unjust, for, in the lowest professions, in minds the most obscured by the gloom of brute strength, there are always some traces of generosity, and, as it were, a beam of the divine nature. It is the green spot, the oasis of which English moralists speak, and is found even in those hearts where the inclemency and sterility of the desert preside.

"All professions," the conjuror went on, "have their misfortunes. Mine, thank Heaven, is inoffensive; I have only to reproach myself with a few innocent falsehoods, although no one believes a conjuror; but we have a special enemy provided by Nature, and they are deaf men. During the last performance I gave at Chatham races, I was singularly annoyed by the presence of an old gentleman, who discovered all my tricks and laughed maliciously. As the success of the professor of legerdemain consists chiefly in turning away the attention of his audience by the remarks he makes, and as this old man was deaf and could not hear my words, he foiled all my skill. Our great art is to deceive the eyes by employing the ear; the skill of the fingers may be acquired, while this art is the gift of Nature alone.

The showman, the acrobat, the performer of legerdemain, and the pugilist retired, for it was already late, and the manager took advantage of their departure to sing the praises of an actor's

life. To hear him, the strolling player was like the lily of the field, which toils not, neither does it spin. Existence was unrolled before him like a continuous journey, a scene full of changes, a river whose banks succeed without monotony and with delicious landscapes. This description, far too flattering, excited smiles of incredulity; to prevent any contradiction, he therefore began praising his company, which, he said, was the best going about England. He confessed that some of them could not read, but he hastened to add that they knew their parts by heart better than all the rest. These phenomena of memory are not rare among illiterate actors. He asserted, moreover, that the greatest actors the English stage has boasted, commenced under canvas. Did not Edmund Kean himself perform in his youth at Bartlemy Fair, and later filled the part of Harlequin in Richardson's, the old showman's, company? Was it not a company of players, more or less strolling, that, by stopping in the town of Stratford, inspired William Shakspere himself with a theatrical taste?

At that name I interrupted him by asking him if his company performed the plays of the great poet?

"We play everything," he said, with a confident air. "During fair time we must make money, and are obliged to offer the public only compressed pieces; but in winter we give performances of three

or four hours, in barns or stables, and then we are artistic. Shakspere's plays have only one fault; they cost too much to mount, and we are compelled to obviate this inconvenience as well as we can, and make up by our industry for our want of pecuniary means. Our scenery does not always answer, I confess, to the requirements laid down by the poet, and the spectators have sometimes laughed at seeing us play in a forest that scene in 'King Lear' which passes on a naked rock on the sea-shore. In such cases we get off by telling the public that the scene we had ordered had not arrived by train or coach. Last year we played with considerable success 'Venice Preserved;' but as we had no bell, an apothecary in the town lent us a pestle and mortar, which produced exactly the same effect. The first tragedian whom you see at the end of the table is very fine in the banqueting scene of 'Macbeth,' when Banquo's ghost appears; he discovered, however, that the scene as usually played in theatres, produced too great an outlay in broken glasses, and so our Macbeth contents himself with throwing down a pewter pint-pot on seeing the spectre; these slight changes in no way alter the accuracy of the piece. One day, when playing 'Othello,' we could not find among the whole of us a white pocket-handkerchief for the famous scene you know; so a cotton handkerchief with red squares took its

place. Who can tell us, too, whether the celebrated Moor had not a partiality for red chessboard handkerchiefs?"

The first tragedian, a young man of about five-and-twenty, who had listened with surprise and irony to the manager's remarks, at length broke the silence.

"It would not appear," he said, "that the life of a strolling player is so mild and agreeable as our manager would like us to believe. Fortunately for himself, the strolling player forms a distinct race, we might almost say animal, in the human species. Hardened to every privation, he has the patient stomach of the camel; when he finds anything to eat, he eats it; to drink, he drinks it; when the means of procuring food and drinking are lacking, he philosophically goes without both for days together. I allow that some of us are inclined to drown the grief of a disappointed ambition in intoxication, but it is not their fault so much as the public's. The strolling player has many friends, or at least knows many people; every one wants to treat him to a glass of ale; though it would be often much kinder to offer him a breakfast. I do not know whether our clothes have the beauty of the lily, but I do know that they were bought for a trifle of a Jew, in whose hands they were probably left by other wretched strollers. After all, what is human life? A stage, as Shaks-

pere tells us, and all the men and women merely players. Our life certainly justifies the poet more than any other, but then we chose it, and have no right to complain of it. It has, besides, its ebb and flow; there is a tide in the affairs of men, which taken at the flood leads on to fortune: well, we wait for that tide. I studied in London, and believe myself as skilful as many others who are nightly applauded in our great theatres. What have I hitherto wanted to ensure success? Opportunity. How many actors are there who resemble Byron? they go to bed nobodies, and wake up to find themselves famous."

I had already noticed that vanity is the characteristic feature of the strolling player. Most of them have enlisted in an ungrateful profession, full of troubles, and generally despised, under the impulse—can it be credited?—of a love of glory. In the face of such illusion, I asked myself if pride were not in this case the veil thrown by Providence over human weaknesses and the wretchedness inseparable from the condition of a strolling player, in order to render his life endurable? Without self-esteem many of the poor creatures would die of despair.

Several fresh pots of beer having been placed on the table, the conversation grew animated. The clown, who had hitherto remained taciturn, repeated some of the old jokes, which had made the public laugh from time immemorial. I pro-

fited by this moment of confusion to ask my neighbour on the left the motive of her mysterious visit to Chatham churchyard. After a moment's hesitation, she told me a portion of her history.

"I was born," she said, "in the north of England. My mother having died when I was still in the cradle, and my father being separated from his second wife, I was brought up by my grandmother, a good soul. She loved me, and I was attached to her; but my heart was not so good as hers. I was fifteen, and my principal fault was coquetry. When a company of strolling players passed through the village, and stopped for the fair, I was dazzled by the dress of the women dancing in front, and who appeared to me in a cloud of lace like so many visions of paradise. It was a very different thing, though, when, after paying my penny, I was admitted into the booth, and saw, for the first time in my life, a tragedy, of which Jane Shore was the heroine. I fancy that I must have naturally had some dramatic instincts, for my emotion was extreme. I dreamt about it all night, and recited passages aloud. I saw myself on the boards, in a sort of ecstasy. If a fairy had at that moment proposed to me to be an actress or a queen, I should have chosen the former without hesitation. On the next day I returned at an early hour to the front of the

theatre, and one of the company, remarking the looks I bent on the women in costume, asked me if I should like to be an actress. 'With all my heart,' I answered him. He said it only depended on me, and that I had a pretty face to make my fortune on the stage. Flattered by the compliment, but ravished even more by the prospect opened before me, I resolved to engage myself. The man asked me if I had any relations; I told him I was an orphan, and my own mistress, being careful not to say a word about my poor grandmother. On returning to our cottage I made a bundle of my clothes, which was not very heavy, and with the greatest mystery prepared my arrangements for flight. Before daybreak I crossed the old lady's bedroom on tiptoe, and closed the street door after me, which shut without a sound. It pained me thus to leave granny without kissing her or taking a farewell look at her, but I felt that if I approached the bed the strength I needed to carry out my design would fail me. I had committed a fault, a great fault, but the expiation was not long delayed. At first I was mad with joy at trying on the theatrical dresses and reciting a few lines, but the intoxication did not last long. If I had a crown of faded roses on my head, I had a thorn in my heart. As my grandmother had brought me up religiously, I very soon perceived how blamable my conduct

had been, and felt remorse. But I had gone too far to draw back. What was I now on the earth but a vagabond? Afterwards, I married the first tragedian, and surrendered my flesh-colour tights and wings to little Kitty, the present angel of the company, who is laughing to see us so serious. We underwent both good and bad days; often the dress I wore in the streets did not belong to me, but I hired it for threepence or fourpence at a second-hand clothes-shop. Still I resigned myself to this adventurous life, which, on the other side, is not without its pleasures, for you see a good deal of the country and plenty of people, when one day, at Bury St. Edmunds, I met a lad from my village. He had become a pedlar, and told me that my grandmother, after my departure, had removed to Chatham, where an old sister and some little family matters called her. For the last five years I had ever avoided setting foot in my hamlet, and had kept the company from visiting the fair, for the sight of the church, the school, and the large trees under which I played as a child, would have caused me pain; but, believing that my dear granny still lived at Chatham, I resolved this year to throw myself into her arms and ask forgiveness. On my arrival, I discovered that she had been dead for seven months; and you now know why you saw me in the churchyard. It was more than a tribute of regret I paid that evening to her who

had been so kind to me—it was a tear I shed over my life, and a pardon I asked of the tomb."

At this moment, the landlord entered with a heap of lighted candles in his hand, and told us that he had three good rooms vacant, as well as a large apartment, making up several beds. The clown exclaimed, "Make way for the ladies!" and they occupied the separate rooms: the men, consequently, went to a sort of garret in which stood a dozen beds, with coarse but white calico sheets. I slept but very little: all the splendour of a summer night poured through the window, and cast a species of consolation over the generally painful recollections the evening had left in my mind. I was dreaming with open eyes, when a singular apparition was designed, with a slight noise, in the clear-obscure of the room: it was a lad of about twelve years of age, walking about the floor on his hands with his feet in the air; after thus making a very singular circle twice or thrice, he went back to bed quietly: he was the son of the acrobat, and I learned on the next morning that he had attacks of somnambulism.

An old wooden clock, provided with an alarum, rang at an early hour—for which I thanked it—the time for rising, for the actors had announced their intention of starting before the heat of the day. At breakfast, which consisted of a cup of tea and a slice of bread, the manager made me direct propositions. They were brilliant: during

the first month, the salary would be put at zero (for every one must serve an apprenticeship), but after that, I should share in the receipts in proportion to my talents. To the manager's great surprise—I should say, great displeasure, were I not afraid of infringing on the laws of modesty—of the manager who was attached to the farce of the "Frenchman in Trouble," I declined the engagement.

The natural conclusion of this essay is, that I should try to discover what may be the social mission (big words, which I borrow, though, from an English paper) of the street musicians, showmen, and strolling players. Are these eccentric performers as useless and parasitic as people are often inclined to believe? A few reflections may serve for the solution of this problem, which interests the moralist. It must be in the first place remembered that there are in the factories of London, Manchester, Birmingham, and Sheffield, legions of workmen labouring hard from morning till night, and for whom the means of amusement are not superabundant. A little music at the end of the day, or during the short hours of recreation, does their hearts good. What means would they have to know the operatic airs more or less used, if they were not brought to them by instruments that run the streets? The showman lives on curiosity: but that feeling, though at times absurd, is the root of all great discoveries,

and the germ of civilisation. Some proprietors of travelling menageries render real service by propagating a knowledge of natural history in the country. Monsters themselves belong to science, and I am assured that a great English physiologist, Richard Owen, in this resembling Geoffroy de Saint Hilaire, never misses an opportunity to visit the booths where there are interesting objects. Other showmen carry about with them scientific instruments, telescopes, microscopes, and electrical machines.

As for the strolling player, he has also his usefulness: he strives to gild with a beam of joy the life of poor people, and sweep away (according to the expression of an English poet) the spider-webs which load the brow with care. He produces laughter, that faculty which distinguishes man from animals. When we reflect, besides, at the cost of what sacrifices these wandering comedians unwrinkle the serious faces of the villagers, we readily forget the grotesque character of their manners, and the eccentricity of their morals. They amuse the crowd, and they suffer: they interpret, well or ill, at certain periods of the year, the masterpieces of the English stage, and we must surely bear in mind that all is relative: the crowns of gilt paper represent, in the eyes of country folk, the grandeur of this world as well as if they were made of solid gold; they are, besides, quite as heavy to the brow that bears them. The

voice of the actor, reciting, even without much skill, the verses of Shakspere, ever gives to human passions a form that purifies them. The solemn and heroic incidents of the drama carry away, by a confused sentiment of grandeur, the most ignorant public from the life of natural interests, and open in the night, if only for an instant, the gates of an ideal world.

END OF VOL. I.

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